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LAMET

HILL PEASANTS IN FRENCH

INDOCHINA

BY

KARL GUSTAV IZIKOWITZ

WITH A NEW PREFACE BY THE AUTHOR

AND AN ADDENDUM

(ALLIANCE AND CLASSIFICATION AMONG THE LAMET)

BY

RODNEY NEEDHAM

AMS PRESS

NEW YORK

LAMET

HILL PEASANTS IN FRENCH
INDOCHINA

BY

KARL GUSTAV IZIKOWITZ

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LAMET

Preface to the AMS Edition

In the Preface to the First edition, I stated that this book about the Lamet, swidden cultivators in the northern part of Laos, was one of the results of my visit to Indochina during the years 1936 to 1938, during which time I stayed among the Lamet for about eight months. Since that Preface is reprinted here, I will direct the reader to it, especially for my acknowledgements of all those who helped me at that time.

It is of course a great pleasure for me to see a reprint edition of my book. Unfortunately the 1951 printing produced far too few copies; at that time I did not realize that it would go out of print so quickly. I suppose that the demand was due, in part, to an increased interest in Southeast Asia as this part of the world unfortunately became a theater of war.

When I started my fieldwork, very few anthropologists had been interested in the mainland of Farther India. It had been an almost forgotten world and it was mainly Burma, especially the Naga people, about which a number of monographs had been published. In the areas of French rule, a vast amount of research had been done on the archaeology of the old Khmer culture and similar vestiges that bear the influence of India. The epigraphists found excellent opportunities to interpret the old inscriptions. Few, however, were concerned with the hill tribes; only some missionaries, who had lived among these tribes for a considerable time and had learned their languages, produced some remarkable ethnographical reports. Otherwise there was little interest in tribes without a written history; clearly the fantastic monuments of the old civilizations appealed to the imagination far more than did the poor hill tribes, and investigations were governed more by esthetic and historic attitudes than by an interest in living societies in this part of the world. (Similar emphasis was given to investigations in other countries, where important ruins were many and impressive.)

We are reminded by this that the research interests of anthropology have changed often over the years. Modern anthropology started, more or less, in Melanesia and continued in Africa. By now it covers most of the globe, as the study of living societies has increased and investigative methods have improved. Why a new field becomes a subject of investigation is something that has perhaps not yet been elucidated. Factors governing the choice of a field have to do not only with anthropological problems, but also to some extent with political events. This may be the case with Indochina in the last decades.

Since this book was first published, a great deal of material from other parts of mainland Southeast Asia has appeared. However, it is not yet sufficient to provide a firmer and more profound grasp of the anthropology of the area. I should perhaps have revised this book and tried to make some comparisons with the new facts. But I leave it to a younger generation of colleagues to continue. As an excuse I can best quote my teacher in anthropology—the late Erland Nordenskiöld—who said: "To be able to reread those works one has published is a sign of high-grade senility."

At the time I did my field work among the Lamet, methods were not as developed as they are now. (In 1937 Malinowski still dominated anthropology.) And I regret very much indeed that my stay in the field was far too short. I had hoped to get back and, in the autumn of 1939, the opportunity to do so arose. But the war started and it became difficult, and very soon impossible, to return. At that time my intention was to complete my material on the Lamet and then proceed with a study of the Black Thai in Upper Tonkin. Their society was quite fascinating and, in contrast to most of the Thai, they had not yet been converted to Buddhism.

In 1963 I returned again to Laos, but by that time conditions were so unsafe that it was impossible to continue field work, either with the Lamet or with the Black Thai. I hope, however, that some colleague might now be able to continue where I was unable. Furthermore, I hope that those who are trained as anthropologists in the new independent states will begin wide research in their own homelands. It is doubtless important to gain a knowledge of one's own country and one's own position with the aid of modern anthropological methods. To know one's own society will certainly contribute not only to self-understanding, but to self-confidence as well.

Southeast Asia, like many other areas, is a mosaic of different societies. I don't believe that a pluralistic society is a drawback. On the

contrary, I am certain that solutions can be found to make it possible for different societies to work together within a single state. To scratch out the differences and achieve uniformity does not create any basis for the mutual exchange of thought and ideas between different peoples and systems.

I would like to acknowledge the publishers for making this new edition available. Finally, I wish to thank Dr. Rodney Needham for his willingness to include his valuable analysis of the Lamet kinship system.

K.G.I., 1977

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PREFACE

This is a book about the Lamet, swidden¹⁾ cultivators in the northern part of Laos in French Indochina. It is one of the results of my visit in Indochina during the years 1936 to 1938. My stay among the Lamet was, however, rather short, about eight months, during the last four months of which I got most of my material here published.

My purpose here is not to treat the social life and culture of the Lamet in its entirety, but rather to try to view these things from the Lamet's activity as primitive agriculturists. For this reason, I cannot call my book "The Economic Life of the Lamet" or anything similar, since unfortunately it has not been possible for me to accumulate the details required to justify such a title. Instead, I have tried to give a general idea of the Lamet as peasants.

I have already published a few short papers about different parts of the culture of the Lamet, and these will be used to some extent in this work. I have, however, largely eliminated the comparative points of view set forth in the published articles, since it is not my aim here to try to make comparative studies, but rather only to show the relation between the different categories of social life.

The description given in this book of the life of the Lamet refers²⁾ to the conditions in Indochina before the war. The manuscript was written before the war ended and literature and information available since the war have not been included.

¹⁾ The primitive system of farming which involves clearing and burning the forest is used in many parts of the world. It is expressed in the anthropological literature in terms from various native languages, e. g., *jhum* in Burma, *ray* in French Indochina and about thirty or more words in other countries. In English it is sometimes called "shifting cultivation" or "slash and burn." There is no single word in ordinary English which covers the meaning, since the method is no longer used in England. In contrast to English, the Swedish language has a single word, *svedja*, e. g., a burnt clearing (n.) and to burn a clearing (v.), in ordinary use today, because the method has been continued up until modern times. In searching for an English word I have taken the helpful suggestion of Professor EILERT EKWALL (of the University of Lund), a dialect word, *swidden*. I do not wish to increase the already long list of terms in use but to substitute for them a word more suitable for scientific works in English, if a Swede may be so presumptuous!

My material is by no means complete. Many important links and details are lacking because I was not allowed to be present at some of their more significant ceremonies, and I could not observe all of their activities. Simply asking the Lamet how certain things have come to be, as every field worker knows is not at all sufficient. It is necessary to be present whenever possible in all that takes place in their lives, and to observe each activity most minutely. However, everything can not occur in such a short space of time as the duration of my stay among the Lamet, and therefore my material must be incomplete. Nor was the situation made easier by all the suspicion and secrecy which surround some of their more important rites. This is especially the case in such events as burial rites and the cult of ancestors, which should be understood because of the significant role they play in the social life.

My journey was undertaken alone, and as help I had, besides my Lamet acquaintances, a Laotic interpreter. Without assistance from others, however, my expedition would have been impossible, and this refers especially to the really great help I had from the French authorities. Therefore I take the opportunity now to thank first of all Monsieur G. COEDÉS, at that time Directeur d'Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient in Hanoi, who was very helpful indeed in both scientific and more technical details in connection with my field work. Further, I am deeply obliged to the French officials in the province of Haut-Mékong. Monsieur Y. TURQUET DE BEAUREGARD, Résident de la province de Haut-Mékong, facilitated in every way my trip through his province. Moreover, I obtained a great deal of help from Messieurs P. DIONISI, Inspecteur de la Garde Indigène, and R. BARON, Garde principal de la Garde Indigène and appointed head of the Muong Sing delegation. Besides, all the Frenchmen I had to deal with in my journeys through Indochina, welcomed me with the greatest hospitality and friendliness, and did all in their power to make things easy for me.

Furthermore, I must thank all the native officials and informants who were of great assistance to me, and this refers especially to the Laotic chief of the Lamet canton, Monsieur OUN HUEUN.

Without financial support from different institutions and private persons, I could never have undertaken this expedition, and to all those who assisted me in this respect I would like to extend my deepest gratitude. The trip was financed chiefly by THE ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION, whose fellowship was awarded me. Moreover, I have received contributions from THE HUMANISTIC FUND of Sweden and a grant from JAMES CARNEGIE'S

FUND at the University of Gothenburg. THE SWEDISH SOCIETY OF ANTHROPOLOGY AND GEOGRAPHY were kind to award me the Vega scholarship.

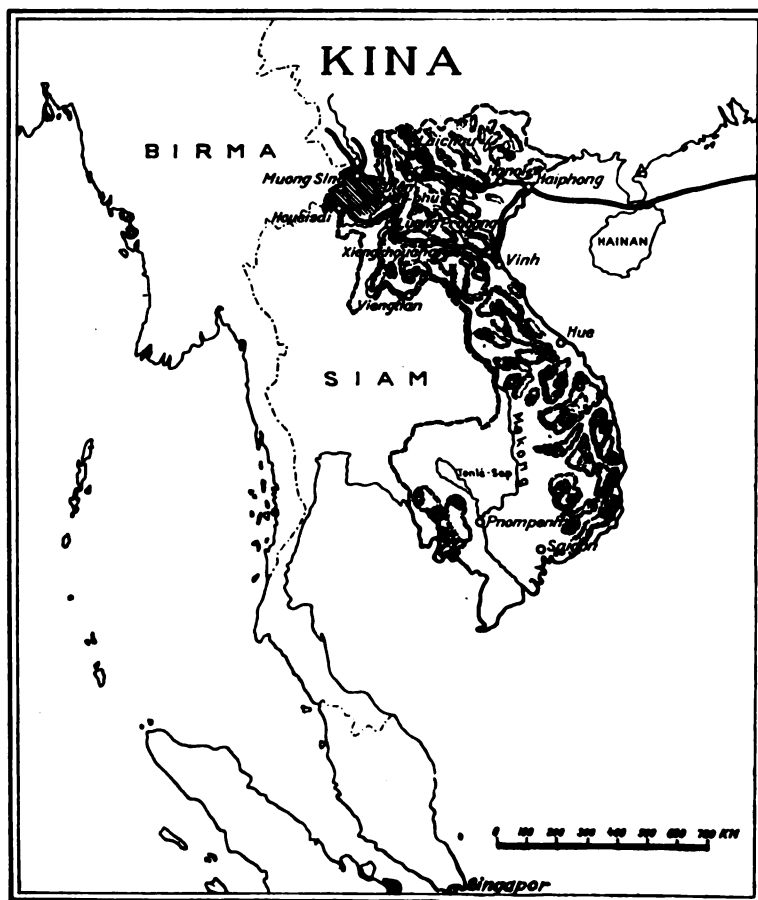
Several of my personal friends, Director EMIL HÜTTNER, Major ERIC SEIDENFADEN, my sister Miss RAKEL IZIKOWITZ, dentist-in-chief, and my brother Dr. SANDER IZIKOWITZ have contributed with valuable help in various ways.

The pharmaceutical factory ASTRA, LTD., Södertälje provided me with an excellent medicine kit and the late JOSEPH SACHS, at time director of Nordiska Kompaniet, Ltd., Stockholm gave me a splendid Contax camera.

The preparation and printing of this book has been possible thanks to various funds, THE HUMANISTIC FUND, THE ROYAL AND HVITFELDT SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION, THE LÄNGMAN CULTURE FUND, and last but not least by GÖTEBORGS MUSEUM of which organization the Ethnographical Museum is a member.

Mrs. OLIVE SJÖLANDER has translated my Swedish manuscript and Dr. HENRY WASSÉN, K. E. LARSSON, B. A. and my wife have helped me with the proof-reading. Mr. Larsson has furthermore prepared the index.

In conclusion I should like to extend my heartiest thanks to Professor GERHARD LINDBLOM, for his kindness in obtaining for me the means for making a representative collection from the Lamet and some of their neighbors for the State Ethnographical Museum in Stockholm.



Map. 1. The author's itinerary in French Indochina. The hatched area is the province of Haut-Mékong.

PRONUNCIATION OF LAMET WORDS

The stress is on the last syllable.

p, t, k are unaspirated. A real aspiration seems not to exist in Lamet. When *h* follows *p, t, k* it is pronounced like a separate consonant, e. g., *khē* = moon sounds like *kəhē*.

Contrary to other Mon-Khmer languages the Lamet words have musical accent. This is not indicated.

Vowels:

These are either short or long. The latter are indicated by a dash over the vowel such as in *laār* = two, the first *a* is short and the second one long.

o = an open *o* as in English *hot*.

u = as in English *put* when short, German *Hut* when long.

ə = vocal murmur, as in English *e* in *the*; when long as the Annamese “*o* barbue,” e. g., a tensed central low vowel.

u = a tensed central high vowel, as “*u* barbue” in Annamese.

æ = as German *ä* in *Käse*.

e = as French *é* in *été*.

Consonants:

č = as *ch* in English *church*.

š = between *s* and *sh* or more as German *ich-Laut*.

x = as Spanish *jota* or German *ach-Laut* (not so hard).

g = as *ng* in English *song*.

r = an *r* with the tip of the tongue.

ʌ = a velar *r*.

ʼ = after a consonant; Lamet *n'ā* = house is pronounced as *njā* and *leiʼ* = to enter as *leitj*. The sign *ʼ* means that a consonant should be pronounced soft or palatalized.

h = a real *h* as in English *hat*.

The other letters are pronounced as in French.

A more detailed and exact information about the Lamet phonetics will be published later on in connection with a small dictionary.

CHAPTER 1.

Introduction

The main object of my field work in French Indochina was to study the relationship between irrigation and society in Monsoon Asia. In order to understand irrigation's social role, I felt that I should first gain some experience from two societies within the same geographical region, one of them using irrigation, the other one cultivating the land without it. When I had thus obtained examples of the differences in the social life between these two societies I should be able to compare them and in this way the role played by irrigation would be made more clear.

In order to solve the problem presented, I was obliged to undertake a series of expeditions. On my first trip, therefore, I wanted to investigate principally a somewhat primitive farming culture, where cultivation is *not* based on irrigation. This was one of the reasons why I began with the Lamet. The greater part of my expeditions was devoted to this tribe. During the last months of my stay in French Indochina, moreover, I made preparatory investigations and reconnoitering among the different Thai peoples, especially the so-called Black Thai in Upper Tonkin. The Thai peoples make use of a special system of irrigation, and they have an interesting feudal organization which I had hoped to study more thoroughly on my next expedition.

Furthermore, it was my intention on this second expedition to go back to the Lamet and fill in what was lacking in my material, and to check up on what I had already obtained. The main part of this trip then, would be devoted to the Thai peoples. This would have been made relatively easier, since on my first expedition I had already found out where I could base my investigations, and besides, I had obtained a general idea of what the Thai tribes were like. Such pre-investigations are extremely important, for there is no satisfactory information about these peoples to be obtained from the available literature about Further India. In all pioneer anthropological work, one cannot avoid dividing time and energy among several tribes on a first expedition. This is necessary for obtaining an empirical view of the whole. This second expedition was to have taken place in the

spring of 1940, but unfortunately it had to be cancelled on account of the war.

Further India, from an anthropological point of view, has so far been a forgotten part of the world — with certain exceptions. In fact, only the Naga tribes in Assam and the primitive peoples in the Malay Peninsula are well known. The remainder of Further India can be said to be as yet a white spot on the map. Literature about the tribes that live within this white spot is still altogether too scanty to be used in comparative study.

However, one must begin somewhere, and I started with the Lamet. At that time I had to choose between agriculturalists of two kinds, those belonging to the Tibeto-Burman languages, and those belonging to the Mon-Khmer. The first-named were known to a lesser extent through studies of the Naga, while the latter were more or less unknown. I make an exception of course of the two highly civilized peoples Mon and Khmer — both strongly influenced by higher Indian civilization.

Among the primitive Mon-Khmer peoples which have up to the present time been studied, are the so-called Moi tribes in southern French Indochina. For some years now, some ethnographers have been investigating these peoples, although as yet they have not published anything. Therefore, I considered it better to devote myself to some of the more northerly groups of this language family. There is much that indicates that the so-called "wild Wa" living in the northern Shan states have a culture which is in a marked degree untouched and rather ancient. It is possible that investigation of this culture could lead to a solution of many problems in Further India. However, the Wa are notorious head-hunters, and the Europeans who have tried to penetrate their land have done so at the risk of losing their heads, and have indeed in some cases been killed. However, there do exist some reports from boundary commissions and military expeditions that have travelled through the Wa states, and these are of tremendous interest. Their territory as yet has no administration, and therefore it is impossible for the time being to study this tribe.

It was therefore quite natural that I tried to find a people as nearly as possible related to the Wa. For this reason I turned to the tribes belonging to the so-called Palaung-Wa group. The Palaung are Buddhistic, and certainly quite strongly influenced by the Thai peoples living in the region. This is also true of the Lawa in North Siam. In French Indochina there were the Khmu, the Lamet and several other tribes. According to information I received from French officers and officials who had travelled among these tribes, I discovered that the Lamet were probably the most

interesting. Unfortunately they were altogether too little known. Picking up a word here and there, I gathered that they belonged to the Palaung-Wa group. Information about the Lamet was likewise scanty in the literature to be had, and it was not until I met General Salan, who had spent some time in the Lamet district, that I decided to begin my investigations with the Lamet.

With the purposes I had in view, it would probably have been better to begin my research work with a tribe that was somewhat better known one of the Naga tribes for example. Because of the literature that exists, it would be easier to make comprehensive investigation. One could then avoid drawing the preliminary general contours of the culture in question, and immediately specialize on one aspect of their society, for example, the economic life. However, the unknown is always tempting, and perhaps just for that reason I chose a totally unknown tribe. There are risks, however, in doing this, for it is like gambling when one begins to study tribes among which no research at all has been done. I had no way of knowing how much remained of the Lamet culture. Their social life could even be in a state of disintegration, and perhaps they could not give any assistance in the solution of my problems. It was also possible that it might be difficult to come in contact with the Lamet people, and I would therefore get very insufficient information about their culture. I must admit that I now realize that other tribes I visited would certainly have been much better from the investigator's point of view. The Lamet are certainly very polite, but at the same time they are suspicious, and extremely secretive in regard to some of their more important rites, as for example the cult of ancestors. This is the alpha and omega of their social life, and one must study it in order to reach an understanding of their economic activities.

Only after several months of living among the Lamet, did I begin to get some idea of the contours of their social life. Unfortunately, by that time I had only a short while left at my disposal. I could not stay any longer chiefly for lack of funds, and this was the more disappointing because I had got going to such an extent that a continued stay of only some few months would have yielded results of great importance. At that time it was my intention to return to Sweden as soon as I left the Lamet, in the beginning of February 1938. When I reached Hanoi, more money arrived, but it was then too late to travel back to the Lamet, for the journey over the Annamese mountains is altogether too expensive. It was at that time that I made a trip to the Thai tribes of Upper Tonkin,

instead of turning back, for they were within easy reach with Hanoi as a starting point.

While among the Lamet, I began by learning their phonetics. Unfortunately I could not get hold of an interpreter who could speak Lamet. This was because no one besides the Lamet themselves could speak the language. However, nearly all grown-up Lamet master the Yuan language — this at least refers to the men. They speak it quite fluently. Yuan is a Thai dialect which is closely related to the Lao, and therefore a Lao has no difficulties at all in understanding Yuan, nor a Lamet in understanding Lao. For this reason I made use of a French-speaking Lao as intermediary. Fortunately, Lao is fairly easy to learn, and within a few months I could follow and check the interpreter's questions and the Lamet's answers. Gradually I was able to ask questions myself, and I learned to speak Lao. The interpreter became more and more of a secretary and intermediary, and was useful above all as a "walking dictionary." Finally I even got along in Lao without an interpreter.

But of course this was not enough. From the very beginning I realized that I was obliged to learn as much as I could of the Lamet's own language, for this would then be the best means in my possession for making progress. However, I must confess that I never did learn to speak Lamet, nor to understand their conversation completely, as time did not allow this. On the other hand, I had soon mastered so many Lamet words that I could use their own terms, which was very helpful to me. Even though their language looks simple enough when written down, it was quite a while before the essentials in their phonetics became clear to me. A great many grammatical categories and sentence structures are not yet quite clear. Chinese has been studied for a long time, and by many researchers, but in spite of this sinologists still discuss the meaning of different particles and sentence structures. Therefore I could not be expected to be able to explain and translate after only a short stay among the Lamet. At the time that I wrote down the texts, I considered it better to collect a few and get them as exact as possible, rather than to collect a large number of poorly checked ones.

The writing down of texts took place in this way: I had one of my men to relate in Lamet in a rather slow conversational tone, while I wrote down the text as fast as I could. While my informant told us what he had to say, my head boy Ai Kam sat and listened intently. He was a very intelligent man, and I had trained him specially for this purpose. Unfortunately, his personal knowledge of the culture of the Lamet was minimal,

in spite of the fact that he belonged to the tribe, for he had been away a long time in Siam. I then went through the text with Ai Kam, and wrote it out properly and started to translate it. Meanwhile the text was read aloud for the informant, in the presence of other Lamet persons, in which way it was rechecked. The translation required a lot of time and tried one's patience to the utmost. Even if I translate every word and get the meaning of a sentence explained in Lao, there can be cases where I remain uncertain because of the peculiar construction. For this reason I am unable to publish all the texts in this book, since I am obliged to compare the material very carefully from a linguistic point of view.

Through the texts I have come across a great many interesting questions in the culture of the Lamet, and because of them I am convinced that it is absolutely necessary for an anthropologist to study the language of a tribe from the very beginning. There is hardly anything that supplies so good a starting point for various questions as just texts on magic and the like.

Data on the expedition.

I arrived at Houeिसai, the capital of the province of Haut-Mékong, in January 1937, and immediately set out for the Lamet territory, with the village Pouvé Luong as my goal. However, this village had been ravaged by fire, and a new one was under construction, which was interesting to observe. Since Pouvé was not a pure Lamet village, being largely populated by Khmu, I left it and travelled to other Lamet villages in the vicinity. It was, however, difficult to stay any length of time in these villages because of the difficulty in obtaining food. The Lamet do not like to sell their few domestic animals. So I decided to stay only a short while in each village and do a bit of reconnoitering. Before long, I hoped I would come across a village where I could settle for a longer time. I rode therefore through the Lamet district until about the middle of March when I had an accident with my leg that made it necessary for me to return to Houeिसai.

During my stay in Houeिसai, I had the company of a Lamet boy who taught me the principles of the language. Besides, I got in touch with men from several other tribes. Before returning to the Lamet district, I took the opportunity of going down the Mekong to Luangprabang in order to attend the great festival held by the Lao at their New Year. It was not until the beginning of May that my leg had healed enough to

allow me to sit on a horse and return to the Lamet. I then remained with them until the middle of June. Some days were devoted to the great sacrificial festivals that the Thai-Lu in Tafá hold before cultivation of the fields begins. Tafá, as a matter of fact, was the starting point for my trips in the Lamet territory, since it is centrally located. There also the head of the Lamet canton has his residence.

From the very beginning it had been my intention to travel right across the province Haut-Mékong, in order to find out what people lived in the neighborhood of the Lamet, and to which language group they belonged. Their languages were totally unknown. Therefore, I started out in the middle of June, and headed for Muong Sing via Vieng Phoukha, the heart of the district occupied by the Khuen tribes. This place has previously been of importance for the Lamet district, before the existence of Houeisai and Tafá. From there I continued to Muong Luong Namtha, where after a short visit I rode over the mountains which divide the Nam Tha Valley from the slopes of Muong Sing, and which is about 1900 meters high. I remained in Muong Sing until middle of July. From there I made excursions to the Akha tribes living in the neighborhood.

When I left Muong Sing the rainy season was at its height, and I went by foot over the high mountains back to Vieng Phoukha, and from there back to the Lamet territory. As a matter of fact, I took quite another route on the way back from that I took when I rode to Muong Sing.

I then remained in the Lamet district until the end of January, except for a couple of short trips to Houeisai, where the nearest post and telegraph offices were located and where I could exchange money. One cannot use paper bills in the Lamet district, and since only small copper coins and the smallest silver pieces are accepted, the money I needed was so heavy that I had to engage special bearers for this purpose alone.

Not until the beginning of September did I come across a village where I could stay longer than a few weeks. This was due to the fact that here I could solve the food problem by transporting supplies from Tafá and Lao villages lying along the Nam Tha. It was the village of Mokala Panghay, and there I was able to remain until the end of January, at which time I returned to Hanoi. In the other Lamet villages my sojourn had been limited to three weeks for the longest stay, but as a rule the time was much shorter. Thus my stay in Lamet villages has totalled only about eight months. However, during all my trips in the province of Haut-Mékong, I have had Lamet people in my service.

CHAPTER 2.

Neighbors of the Lamet

The Lamet live in Northern Laos in French Indochina on both sides of the boundary between the province of Haut-Mékong and the protectorate Luangprabang, a Laotic feudal state. Around them live a large number of unknown tribes. In the little province of Haut-Mékong alone, with a diameter of about 250 km., there live at least 25 different tribes, each of which speaks its own tongue, often incomprehensible to the neighbors, and has besides its own particular culture. This confusion of peoples is quite peculiar, and is commonly the case in the whole of Further India and in parts of southernmost China. Few places on earth can reveal such an ethnic and linguistic confusion as this part of the world. In this case the best comparative example is the Caucasus. Before going into detail about the culture of the Lamet, I shall first try to give a description of the tribes neighboring the Lamet, and a short survey of the history of the tract. In fact, this is rather necessary in order to understand the community life of the Lamet depicted in the following.

The confusion of peoples in Further India has come about largely through the immigration from southern China of various kinds of people, since the Chinese have pushed them down from the north, away from their original home areas north of the Yangtze River. Originally, southern China was not Chinese, and in many ways is still not so. This migration of peoples is in progress even today, and while I was in the Lamet district I had the opportunity of observing among other things the contact between the different population groups, such as the Thai and the Lamet, or other tribes. Speaking generally, however, these peoples live quite isolated from one another, since they speak different languages and have different customs. The distance between villages is considerable, and this naturally contributes to the fact that the populations do not mix to any great extent. This is also the case in regard to their cultures. There is one exception, however, and that is the influence extended by the Thai peoples, about which more will be said later on.

In order to obtain greater clarity in this tangle of populations, it is best to begin with linguistic conditions. Thus the so-called Mon-Khmer-speaking peoples must be considered as belonging to Further India's earlier aborigines, and the Lamet are included in this group. Most of these peoples are quite primitive, with the exception of the Mon and the Khmer, both of which have a high civilization which they originally got from India. The rest however, like the Lamet, are rather primitive cultivators of forest clearings.

The Mon-Khmer languages are as yet little investigated, and it is still uncertain whether all the peoples that are usually included in this group can be assigned to one language group. However, there is much that points in this direction, although I cannot go deeper into the subject just now. In any case, the Lamet language has many similarities in common with Mon, Khmer and other languages of this family, but great differences also crop up which heretofore have not been considered as being characteristic of the Mon-Khmer languages. For example, Lamet lacks infixes, which are usual in most Mon-Khmer languages. It differs from these also in that it has intonation, and forms new words by means of change of vowel, etc., to name a couple of examples. I have discovered that intonation exists also in languages nearly related to Lamet. However, I shall refer to this in a work devoted to language.

The Mon-Khmer languages are divided into many groups, of which the so-called Palaung-Wa group is the most northerly and stretches from Burma over north Thailand (Lawa) and all of north Indochina, almost as far as the Tonkin delta. It is possible that before the invasions from northern China took place, this language group stretched in an unbroken line over this district. Judging from historical sources, the Lawa tribe was spread over all of northern Siam, possibly from the Mon territory in southern Burma and Siam to the northern part of the Mekong, that is to say right within the Lamet district.¹⁾

The Lamet's nearest neighbors in the Palaung-Wa group are the Khmu, the Kha Bit, Kha Hok, Cón, and Lamáng. Of these the Khmu are considered "brothers" of the Lamet. When the Lamet speak of their neighbors, they name themselves and the Khmu as one. The culture of both peoples is similar to a degree, and it is evident that they feel a strong kinship, since the Lamet often mingle with the Khmu. In several Lamet villages there are to be found families which can be traced in origin to

¹⁾ G. Coedès: Documents sur l'histoire politique et religieuse du Laos occidental. Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême Orient, T. XXV. Hanoi, 1925.

TABLE 1. Tribes in the Province of Haut-Mékong.

Palaung-Wa:

Lamet	3 806
Khmu	1 778
Khuen	2 915
Côn	73
Kha Doy	61
Kha Bit	58
Other Kha	3 605

Tibeto-Burman:

Akha	3 423
Kha Khui	423
Mossü	24
Mossü Dam	529
Mossü Deng	1 120

Man-Meo:

Meo	271
Yao	2 129
Lantén	574

Thai:

Nió	108
Thai Neua	688
Black Thai	1 271
Yuan	3 003
Niang	122
Lu	?
Khun	?
Lao	?

Others of undertermined language groups:

Kha Sida	31
Paná	112

Note: Kha Hok and Lamáng do not appear in the province of Haut-Mékong. Annamese, Chinese and French are not included in this table.

the Khmu. Many villages are more or less Khmu-ized. This refers especially to the Upper Lamet, who are also strongly influenced by the Khmu as regards their language.

It appears that the Lamet, in referring to their neighbors, consider themselves and the Khmu as the earliest inhabitants, and the other peoples as migrators. The Lamet look upon themselves as the older

brother and the Khmu as the younger. They tell of this in the following legend:

"There was once upon a time a mole, who often associated with the girls in heaven. This mole was in the habit of gnawing apart the traps set in the forests. One day the owner of some traps was digging in the forest, and he came across the mole, who had just gnawed apart his traps. Whereupon the mole said: 'If you do not kill me I will tell you how you can escape the deluge.' The owner of the traps promised then not to kill the mole. And the mole said that the man and his sister should make a big drum, and live in it during the deluge. But I shall remain in my hole in the earth, said the mole. The owner of the traps did as the mole told him, and lived with his sister in a big drum while the deluge lasted. When the waters had subsided, the brother and sister made a tube in order to find out if all the water had evaporated.

"When the earth was free of all the water, the brother and sister came out of the drum. They were the only two human beings left on earth. The brother had tried to find a woman he could marry, but in vain. The sister had also tried to find a man she could marry, but had had no luck. They did not know what to do. Just then there came a bird, the *tiokok*, who sang: 'You two should marry each other.'

"After they were married the woman became pregnant and gave birth to a gourd. She did not know what to do with it, so she placed it in the garden, where it grew, and became bigger and bigger; and one day the brother and sister heard noises inside of it. It was the noise of people who were inside the gourd. Thereupon the husband made a hole in the gourd with an iron bar which had been heated by fire, and out of the hole came the Lamet, Khmu, Lantén, Meo and Yao. Because of the rust on the iron, and the soot round the burned hole, these people were black. When the other people still inside the gourd noticed this they became terrified, and they called out to the brother to cut out another hole so that they need not become black in the face like those who had gone before. The brother did as they asked, and thereupon the various kinds of Thai peoples came out. This is the explanation for their being so light in complexion, while the other races are so dark."

Tribes belonging to the Tibeto-Burman language family are to be found in the most northern part of the province of Haut-Mékong, and are represented by the Akha, Mossü, Kha Khui and possibly the Kha Sida. However, none of these can be said to be immediate neighbors of the Lamet. According to Roux, the Phu-noi, who also belong to this language family, lived in olden times farther south near Vieng Phoukha. I cannot state with certainty, whether they came in contact with the Lamet. At the present time the Phu-noi live in the Fifth Military Territory northeast of the province of Haut-Mékong.¹⁾

¹⁾ H. Roux: Deux tribus de la région de Phongsaly. Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient. T. XXIV, Hanoi. 1925, p. 452.

Among those immigrating at a later date, are the Man and Meo peoples, and they are immediate neighbors of the Lamet. The former are represented by the so-called Lantén, who appeared first about the year 1900, wandering in from the Chinese boundary in the Fifth Military Territory down to the Lamet district. Their emigration was due to fear of the numerous robbers in the Chinese border districts. However, they have no contact with the Lamet that is worth mentioning. Another of these Man peoples are the so-called Yao, who came from northern Tonkin about a decade before the Lantén. They live north of the Lamet district, and between them and the Yao mountains there is a large unpopulated territory.

The Thai peoples are among the earliest into Further India. They are represented by a number of tribes in the province. In the southern part of the Lamet district there are a few Laotic villages along the river Nam Tha. This settling of the Lao, however, is of very recent date, and the emigration has occurred only during the last few decades. As a rule, the Lao frequent the district along the Mekong, and especially that near the mouths of its tributaries.

Before the French had laid claim to the province of Haut-Mékong in 1896, its southern part had belonged to Siam, and was under the rule of the Prince of Xieng-Khong, to whom the Lamet were taxpayers. Taxes were paid chiefly in beeswax, which is much in use by the Buddhistic Siamese. The Thai tribe living in the province of Xieng-Khong are the so-called Yuan. In Siam they are also called Lao or Western Lao, in contradistinction to the Lao in French Laos. The Yuan are also to be found in the province of Haut-Mékong in Houeisai along the banks of the Mekong River and in Muong Luong Namtha, where they arrived at the end of the nineteenth century.

According to the Lamet, there were nevertheless in olden times considerably more Yuan in existence than nowadays, and it is apparent that the Lamet have been strongly influenced by the Yuan, which can be seen in a great many borrowed words, in religious formulas where they have taken certain phrases from the Yuan incantations, and likewise in the practice of their medicine men. Yuan is also the Thai dialect used as a lingua franca in the southern part of Haut-Mékong. This Lamet tradition is supported by historical facts, which are forthcoming in the investigations Lefèvre-Pontalis has made of the history of northern Laos.¹⁾

¹⁾ Mission Pavie, Indochine, 1879—1895. T. V. Voyages dans le Haut Laos. Paris, 1902. P. Lefèvre-Pontalis: Les Younes du royaume de Lan Na ou de Pape, in: T'oung Pao, II, vol. 11—12. Leyden, 1910—11.

In former times the Yuan had settled in certain valleys in the Lamet district. An old caravan path traverses the whole province as far as China, and along this way it seems that ruins of Yuan buildings are to be found, as is also the case in the interior part of the country. The only ruin I have seen was the foundation of an old stupa in Tafá, which very likely was an important center in olden times. I have also tried to find ruins and historical monuments, but because of the Lamet's fear of Yuan spirits, they never dared to show me these monuments. Inscriptions on stones are said to be found in the neighborhood of the village of Sithoun. Vieng Phoukha was once an important center and apparently very densely populated.¹⁾ Nowadays, however, only the Lu and Khuen who have wandered in live there. The latter are really identical with the Khmu, the difference being only that the Khuen have adopted Buddhism. Formerly they were soldiers in the service of Siamese princes. The village lies on a great plateau, which is well irrigated, and it is apparent that great possibilities for Thai settlement exist there. The same regards the great plateau around Muong Luong Namtha.²⁾ There also, it is likely that there was once a densely populated settlement, according to documents which General Salan had collected.

Beyond this the history of the province of Haut-Mékong is very little known. It is possible that information can be obtained from old Siamese documents. Such are to be found in the National Library in Bangkok. The Lamet themselves have nothing to relate about the history of the district further back than the Yuan period. They insinuate, however, that in olden times there were many feuds, with invasions by Chinese bands from the north and Burmese from the west. I learned from an old Khmu man in a village in the Lamet district, that the Burmese in olden times had invaded the Lamet district. At that time there were only Lamet and Khmu in those regions. The Burmese made prisoners of the natives and took them to Burma, where they were forced into military service. In order to prevent them from escaping, their hair was colored with lime. He related further:

"Long, long ago there was constant warfare in these regions. My grandfather told me about this. At that time, as a matter of fact, it was dangerous to walk along the forest paths, and no one dared to live in the villages at night, for at any minute one might be attacked and have one's head cut off. Some people surrounded their villages with wolf-pits for protection. At last

¹⁾ According to an old Yuan MS in General Salan's possession.

²⁾ Lucien de Reinach: *Le Laos*. Paris, about 1911, p. 80.

the situation became absolutely unbearable, for no one dared to make forest clearings, but found their existence in the forests. A few determined men agreed then to demand help from the Yuan, and they made a road through the forest in order to come to the Yuan. When the road was ready, they had worn out five axes, and then the Yuan came and put an end to the fighting."

This tale suggests head-hunting. This manifestation of warfare is of course quite common among certain peoples in Assam and the Shan States, and for that matter, the Lamet's near relatives the Wa are notorious head-hunters. I have tried every means of finding something in the life of the Lamet which would indicate that they like all their kin were head-hunters in olden times, but no such thing has become obvious in either their traditions or their culture. It is of course quite possible that they have not been head-hunters. Even if this practice appears among some tribes, it is not necessarily granted that it was general or belonged to a certain "stage" of culture which all of the Mon-Khmer tribes in Further India must have gone through.

Thus the history of Haut-Mékong is somewhat obscure, and it is possible that further investigation into the traditions of the people, and into Burmese and Siamese documents, can at some future time bring to light the happenings of the past.

There are a great many Thai tribes represented in Haut-Mékong other than those already mentioned. Thus we have the Nió and the Khun along the banks of the Mekong. Both are believed to have immigrated from the Shan States. The Nió were pirates even up to the time of the arrival of the French, and along with other deeds they plundered Xieng-Khong, at which time they took the prince prisoner. This was the cause for certain Lu tribes moving in to French territory at the time of the pacification of Haut-Mékong. These Lu came originally from Ou-Neua, in the northern part of the Fifth Military Territory, in about 1890. They had left this district because of the constant attacks from the much-feared Ho, Chinese bandits. These border attacks were in progress even in our days. Some of their kinsmen united with these Lu, refugees from Muong Lem in the Wa territory in the northern Shan States, driven away by the headhunting Wa. Most of these Lu wandered for months before they finally settled in Siam and in Muong Luong Namtha. From Siam they wandered into the Lamet district, and settled partially in Tafá, and partially in other villages in the neighborhood. This invasion of Lu into the middle of the Lamet district has been of great importance for the Lamet. Like all of the Thai peoples, they settled in the valleys, where it was possible to lay

out irrigated rice fields. In this way they did not take any land away from the Lamet, who dwell on the mountain ridges. Tafá became the most important Lu village, and is even now the center for the administration of one Lamet canton.

Before the Lu settled down in Tafá, only thick-stemmed trees were to be found in the valley, according to what older Lamet men have told me. As I mentioned previously, the valley had been settled, which could be proved partly by the ruins of a Buddhistic stupa, and partly by the meaning of the word *Tafá*. Tafá is the Lu expression for *tapha*, which means "bathing-place of the monks," and by this the name of the place suggests that a monastery must have existed there. But the stupa is already a proof for this fact. The Yuan settlement which according to the tradition of the Lamet once existed in Tafá, must have been very ancient, for no one could remember anything about it, and the thick-stemmed forest which was seen on the arrival of the Lu also points to this.

The Lu living in the Lamet district and its outskirts came from Ou Neua, as has already been said. This village, like most of the Lu villages in the Fifth Military Territory, belonged formerly to the so-called Sipp-song-panná — wrongly translated "the land of 12,000 rice fields" — a feudal realm ruled by the Lu. The capital of this realm was Xieng-Hung in the Chinese Shan States, where the prince of these states still resides. The realm was broken up through the conquest by the French of the Fifth Military Territory.

In Haut-Mékong there are also other Lu to be found to the north in the Muong Sing area. These belonged originally to the feudal principality Xieng-Tong (Kheng-tung) in the southern Shan States (Burma), and was incorporated in 1900 with Haut-Mékong through the London Treaty. Previously these Lu belonged to British Burma. The boundary between the principality Xieng-Tong and the Yuan dominions in southern Haut-Mékong seems to have followed along Muong Luong Namtha. Boundary stones mark the old frontier line. Thus before the arrival of the French, Haut-Mékong was divided between these two feudal states. The Lu in Muong Sing speak a different dialect from that of their kinsmen in the southern parts of the province, and have also different customs. However, they have had no contact with the Lamet, and the case is the same with another Thai people in Muong Sing, the so-called Thai Neua.

Some Lamet villages lie outside the province of Haut-Mékong and belong to the "kingdom" (a feudal realm like other Thai states) of Luang-prabang, or, to use its right Laotic name, *Lan-xang*: "The realm of a

million elephants and the white umbrella." This territory, including the Thai peoples, is ruled by the Lao. However, the settling of Lao within this part of the Lamet district is very scanty, and they have taken up their abode here in the glens of Nam Tha recently. As a rule the Lao have a habit of remaining near the mouths of the tributaries of the Mekong, where they buy up the products which the Khmu, the Lamet, and other mountain tribes deliver. For the Lao in northern Laos, in contrast to those who live to the south, are merchants and handicraftsmen rather than farmers. They manufacture their own wares, such as textiles, pottery, ornaments, iron products, etc., and travel around with them to the more primitive mountain tribes, with whom they exchange these things for rice, stick-lac, and other products. The Lao merchants often paddle their canoes up the tributaries of the Mekong in order to sell their wares to the primitive mountain folk. This trade has acquired quite an importance in the economic life of the Lamet, and I shall refer to it further on in a chapter on trade.

Some of the Lao settled farther up the tributaries in order to be nearer their clients in the mountains. It is also possible that they wanted to compete with those living near the mouths of the rivers.

Thus the Lao settled where it suited them best commercially, for example, where a path met a river, a fork, or a place that the mountain people could easily reach with their bamboo rafts. Agriculture took second place, and since the Lao like the Lamet have ordinary swiddens, it was not necessary to seek land suitable for irrigation. The southern Lao and the Lu, on the other hand, are mostly farmers, and cultivate rice only in irrigated fields. Some Lu have also settled along the Nam Tha in the neighborhood of Lamet villages, but since they are not merchants, but mainly farmers, they have come where they found irrigable land.

In the Lamet district around the Nam Tha I had the opportunity of visiting a Laotic village of the above-described kind. This village existed mostly on trade with the Lamet. It lay only about two hours by foot from Mokala Panghay. It was really made up of two villages, one of which was the first Laotic settlement in the district. The Lao there told me that they came there first on their trading trips, and later on stayed for a time in order to establish a market with the Lamet and Khmu. Gradually they became permanently settled there. Since they had no women along, they chose wives among the Lamet and Khmu women. Thus a peculiar mixture of a village came into being, which was interesting to study. The plan of the village was typical of the Lamet villages in these

regions. It was built round an open square with a typical Lamet men's house in the middle. The dwellings had certain details which were Laotic, and some which were of Lamet type. The Lamet had helped with the building, and done it according to their ideas, and the Lao had directed the enterprise and thus included certain Laotic details. Later on some Khmu had come to the village. The population therefore consisted of Laotic men, a few Khmu men, and chiefly Lamet women. The children were a mixture of three components.

About a hundred meters from this village, lay a pure Laotic village with a Buddhistic temple and all that goes with it. This village had come into being later on, when it was seen that the first Laotic pioneers had flourished there. However, during recent years trade had been poor, and the Lao had been obliged to change over to agriculture in order to exist. This picture of Laotic infiltration in a territory populated by primitive tribes belonging to the Palaung-Wa group, is of particular interest. As is obvious from this description, the land had originally been settled by the Lamet, Khmu, and other Palaung-Wa peoples. All these tribes are primitive swidden farmers, living in the forests on plains or up in the mountains. Later on Thai tribes have immigrated and partially subjugated the primitive tribes in the district. The Thai call all these by a common name "Kha," which has become a kind of class label for non-Thai peoples. Thus the Thai always say, Kha Lamet, Kha Khmu, Kha Hok, etc. Even the prominent and cultured Cambodians are called Kha. This word means servant or slave, which is due to the fact that the Kha were subjugated and incorporated into the Thai peoples' feudal states, and that the Kha became to a great degree dependent upon their masters, to whom they paid taxes, and were forced into other kinds of service. This concerns chiefly the Khmu. The Lamet on the other hand seem to have been rather independent.

Thus in contrast to the Kha, were the Thai, which really means *people*. But as an opposite for *kha*, the slaves, the word *thai* has come to mean free people, and through that "the free." The Siamese like to translate the word *thai* as "the free," and Siam is called in Siamese *Muong Thai* — Thailand — The Land of the Free." This translation, "The Land of the Free," has been official during the war, when Siam proclaimed that it wished to be called Thailand.¹⁾

¹⁾ This changing meaning from *people* to "the free" is quite interesting, since we have an analogy to it among the Indo-European languages: *Leute* (German) and *люди* (Russian) = people, seems to be the same word as *liber* (Latin) = free.

How this infiltration of Thai proceeded, we do not know in detail as yet, and just as little has been brought to light in regard to the process of contact between the Thai and the primitive inhabitants. My short sketch of the settling of the Lao near the Nam Tha gives only one example of this.

During the latter part of my expedition, I visited the Black Thai in Tonkin. At that time I discovered to my surprise that these Thai, like the Lamet, were organized into totemic clans. When I investigated the totem myths about the origin of these clans, I found that they resembled those of the Lamet quite closely. I also came across a tradition that certain clans were originally of "Kha" derivation. The appearance of these people suggests that this is probably so. The Black Thai, unlike other Thai peoples, are quite thick-set and dark-complexioned, about the same as the Khmu. But this is not the reason for their being called the Black Thai. Their name comes from the fact that the women wear black blouses.

The Black Thai have also certain customs which point to Kha origin. It is possible that the Thai who immigrated, as in the Laotic case described above, mixed with the original inhabitants, who in these parts consisted of Khmu. These Thai are organized feudally, and the nobility are obviously of pure Thai origin, while the lower clans are mixed. This process has certainly been in progress to a wide extent wherever the Thai have wandered in.

The Muong tribes who live on the hills right at the edge of the Annamese delta in Tonkin and northern Annam, are supposedly also a result of this migration of peoples and contact of cultures. G. Maspéro regards their language as a kind of proto-Annamese.¹⁾ But their culture has very little in common with the strongly civilized Annamese, and resembles mostly that of the Black Thai in organization, manners and customs. Muong is really a collective term for a number of different tribes. However, the Muong have as yet been very little studied.²⁾ Judging by all that I have seen, I get the impression that they, like the Black Thai, are a mixture of Thai and primitive inhabitants. It is possible that the differences between the various Muong tribes are due to different proportions in this mixture.

¹⁾ Georges Maspéro: *Grammaire de la langue khmère*. Paris, 1915, pp. 17 seq.

²⁾ At the time of reading the proofs of this passage the work by Jeanne Cuisinier: *Les Mu'ò'ng, géographie humaine et sociologie*, Paris 1948, came to my knowledge.

The original inhabitants that the Thai mixed in with must certainly have been of Palaung-Wa origin. Tribes belonging to this language group live almost as far out as the mountains bordering on the delta and the coastal plains, and it is possible that they once lived on the very edge of the delta.

The Annamese, Indochina's largest group of people, have their origin in Tonkin and northern Annam. In language and culture they are very strongly influenced by the southern Chinese. Nevertheless, as yet no one has been able to establish the relation of the Annamese to other languages. Maspéro has suggested an hypothesis that the Annamese language is a mixed product, exactly like their culture. The language mixture should consist of four component parts. If we eliminate the many Chinese borrowed words, we have a language strongly resembling Muong, which Maspéro considers to be proto-Annamese. He goes on to show that the phonetics in the Annamese language as well as parts of the grammatical construction, are of Thai type. But words for certain vital things, such as parts of the body, numbers, and others, are of Mon-Khmer origin. Besides these, there should exist a fourth element, the relation of which he cannot set forth. The words considered to be of Mon-Khmer origin belong, in my opinion, to the Palaung-Wa group. A great many ordinary words in the Lamet, Khmer, and other nearly related languages are to be found in the Annamese. This cannot be due to borrowing from Annamese on the part of these primitive people, for they have had almost no contact with the real Annamese.

From my own experience in the Lamet-Lao mixed village, referred to previously, and among the Black Thai, I should consider it probable that Maspéro is on the right track. Apart from the mystical fourth component, about which nothing is known, I should like to set up the working hypothesis that the Annamese were originally made up of a mixture of Thai and Palaung-Wa peoples who lived in the border territory around the Tonkin delta. This should have produced a culture similar to the one existing among the Muong tribes. Their farming should have been based on the cultivation of rice by means of so-called irrigation, which is typical of the mountain valleys in Indochina. This mixed population should thus have dwelt right on the edge of the Tonkin delta, where the valleys begin to widen down towards the plains. Through the introduction of so-called elevation-irrigation, which includes the building of extensive embankments — possibly due to Chinese influence — it became possible to colonize and cultivate the delta region. In order

to see how far this hypothesis agrees with facts, much research yet is needed among the Annamese and the peoples of northern Indochina. Thus it is not only a question of studying the "pure" cultures, but also of taking notice as well of the interesting mixture phenomena.

Finally, we have still another migration to take into consideration, namely the French, but since there were only four Frenchmen in the whole province of Haut-Mékong, and none in that part of the Lamet district lying within the protectorate of Luangprabang, the Lamet have very little immediate contact with the French. No missionaries of any kind have made their appearance. To be sure, once a missionary journeyed through the province of Haut-Mékong in order to distribute bibles, but since the Lamet are unable to read they did not receive any. On the other hand, indirect influence of the French has taken a faster hold, but we shall deal with this in a later chapter in which I examine the changes within the Lamet culture due to outside influence from foreign peoples. I shall then make a summary of the relation of the Lamet to their neighbors.

In order to get a survey of the neighbors of the Lamet, I shall now describe a horseback journey through the Lamet district.

If we ride along the caravan route which goes from Houeisai to the Lamet district, we come upon a Khmu village only 3 km. from Houeisai. Leaving it, we ride through jungle-clad mountains, and valleys overgrown with thick-stemmed trees or with bamboo. At the distance of about 19 km. we arrive at a Lantén village. The people living there have originally come from northern Tonkin. It is a village comprised of only three houses. The first halting place lies about 25 km. from Houeisai, and there we see a Khmu village. Farther in and north of the caravan route about 2 km. away, there is a comparatively large Lu village right on the bank of the Nam Ngao. Here also the first Lamet villages appear. However, they lie higher up in the mountains, quite far from the route. The Khmu village lies on flat ground, which seems to be the case with most of the Khmu villages in this district. But there are also Khmu tribes who, like the Lamet, build up on the mountain ridges. It may be a case of two different Khmu tribes. The people in the Lu village originate from the Wa territory in the northern Shan states.

We continue along the caravan route and meet practically no settlement in almost the whole of the second lap of our journey, but narrow paths lead in to Lamet villages on both sides of the way. These villages lie at about three or four hours' distance by foot through the forest.

The third lap is just as devoid of villages as the second, and only towards the end of it do we reach Tafá, a large Lu village of about 500 inhabitants. We are then in the middle of the Lamet district without as yet having seen a single Lamet village along the caravan route. However, they surround Tafá far up on the mountain ridges, and the very nearest one is situated not more than half a day's journey by foot from Tafá. At the points where the caravan trail crosses the highest mountain ridges, one can get a good view of the surrounding mountains. When the weather is fine one can then see the Lamet villages from a great distance. They look like small reddish-brown spots in the middle of the sea of jungle green.

We leave Tafá behind us and continue on our way, and after a day and a half we find ourselves up in the mountains, and we pass by the first Lamet village, Sot Noi, and this is soon followed by others. We take shelter for the night near Pouvé luong, which is a Lamet village with a good streak of Khmu. The next village does not lie so far away from the route, and it is populated only by Khmu. From there we pass several other Lamet villages, and finally come to the last one bordering on the caravan route, Mokahang Tai, about five days' journey from Houeissai. Some hundred meters from this lies a Lu village whose inhabitants originate from Ou Neua. Not so far away lies another Thai village populated by the so-called Niung. They too have migrated rather recently into the province, and have originally come from the Chinese border in the Fourth Military Territory. The reason for their departure is the usual one, they fled in the face of Chinese bandits, and wandered about looking for a suitable place for their irrigated rice fields. The distance from their present dwelling place to the old one is about 380 km. as the crow flies!

We are now right in the neighborhood of Vieng Phoukha, but before we come there, we pass a little village inhabited by Cón. These people speak a language which is closely related to Lamet, but they have originally come from the Burmese boundary near the most northwest corner of the province of Haut-Mékong. It is possible that they are identical with the Kha Doy, and possibly also with the Palaung or Wa. Here we leave the Lamet district and enter the territory of the Khmu tribes. From Vieng Phoukha paths branch out in several directions, one leading to Muong Sing over the territory of the Yao tribes, and another following unpopulated regions to Muong Luong Namtha. Besides these, there are more paths leading elsewhere.

So far we have held fast to the caravan route. But should we leave it and try to reach the Lamet villages, it would be a rather difficult problem,

for it is not always possible to find the paths. Sometimes one must walk for hours in the hills, and sometimes an almost invisible path leads straight over the steep mountains. In this case it is quite necessary to have a Lamet guide, for no one else can find the way. Sometimes the paths are very clearly cut out, so that one could even take pack animals along, but at times they can be so overgrown that it is practically necessary to have men along who go ahead and chop the way clear. However, the distance between the Lamet villages is not very great, and one can always calculate on spending the night in one of them. It is seldom that one is obliged to sleep in the forest, but should this be necessary, one can put up at old halting places, where surely the Lamet have spent the night as far back as they can remember. The Lamet villages are not visible until one comes right upon them. The first sign of them is usually an open place where piles and remains of abandoned barns can be seen. A little nearer one meets a whole group of barns, and then one can be sure of being right in the vicinity of the village, and what the village looks like will be described in another chapter.

CHAPTER 3.

Landscape and Settlement

The Lamet district is situated on both sides of the river Nam Ngao, and is bordered on the south by the Nam Tha. On the west it stretches about 30 km. east of Houeisai, and on the east it reaches hardly further than about 10 km. west of Vieng Phoukha. It is impossible just now to give the exact boundaries, since there are as yet no fully dependable maps of these regions to be had. The best map so far is on a scale of 1: 500 000, and is based on route maps (*levées itinéraires*). However, these are rather brief and in many ways faulty. The district as yet is practically unexplored, and no serious mapping has been undertaken, except for Pavie's expedition, and the journeys made by the French geologists Jacob and Dussault.¹⁾

The land is very mountainous, and on the whole the mountain chains run from a N-S direction to NE-SW, following the geosynclinals according to the investigations of the French geologists. Both of the tributaries of the Mekong, Nam Ngao and Nam Tha, follow the tectonic foundation lines.

The mountain rock is almost totally covered with masses of earth, and it is seldom that a bit of bare mountain rock can be seen.

The climate in these regions is the typical monsoon climate, but even within this type of climate certain variations occur. The contrast between the rainy season and the dry period is quite marked. The latter period begins at about the end of October, and in November it is as a rule quite dry. Besides, the temperature is quite low in the mountain heights, especially at night. The Lamet call the first part of the dry season "the cold time of the year." At the break of the new year, or perhaps more definitely in January, there come small gusts of mist which the French call "crachins." During this month the valleys are filled with damp fogs at night, and it is extremely unpleasant when these ice-cold fogs penetrate nerve and fibre. Upon the mountain tops, nevertheless, it is fairly dry. In the morn-

¹⁾ Mission Pavie, *op. cit.*; Ch. Jacob et L. Dussault: Exploration géologique dans le Haut-Laos. Bulletin du Service Géologique de l'Indochine. Vol. XIII, Fasc. IV. Hanoi, 1924.

ing the fogs remain in the valleys, rising quite high along the ridges of the mountains, almost until the middle of the day, when the strong rays of the sun finally dissolve them. If one stands in a Lamet village in the morning, looking out over the surrounding landscape, one can see the green jungle-clad mountain tops sticking up from the white sea of clouds. Sometimes it can happen that the fogs cover even the highest mountain tops, and then these icy mists sweep over the homes of the Lamet as well.

This cold period lasts until about the middle of March, when a strong heat wave sets in. This is the warm but dry period of the year which precedes the coming of the monsoon. The streams in the mountain crevices dry up, and the drought is very troublesome in other ways. At the end of April the clouds begin to gather, and then a shower can fall now and again. These first showers are called "the little rain period." Meanwhile the weather continues to be dry right up to the beginning of June, when the rainy season starts. During this month it can rain a few days in succession, and then stop for two or three days, only to break out again in a heavy downpour. Gradually the rainy days melt into one another, and in July and August it rains practically continuously. As early as September it begins to taper off a bit, and in October there are often several days between showers.

Precipitation in the Lamet district is not particularly heavy as compared with other parts of Indochina. Exact measurements do not exist, but judging by the comparisons that have been made, the yearly precipitation in northwestern Laos should vary between 1 500–2 000 mm.¹⁾

Outside of the two tributaries of the Mekong, there are no watercourses of any size in the Lamet district. All that exists is confined to small mountain streams which run in the mountain crevices. During the dry period many of these are nearly dry, so that the Lamet at times have difficulty in getting a sufficient supply of drinking water. During the rainy season these streams are refilled with water, and can even be transformed into roaring torrents and mighty cascades which flow down the mountain clefts.

The high jungle-clad mountains are the most striking feature of the whole landscape. There are but few places where such a rich vegetation exists that it can be considered as having the character of virgin forest. Here we have trees with heavy trunks intertwined with woody vines like the spiny cane palm. The variety of species is considerable. I am not certain whether this is genuine virgin forest or not, since I am not a bota-

¹⁾ Ch. Robequain: *L'Indochine française*, Paris, 1935, p. 17.



Fig. 1. A typical Lamet swidden landscape. Pouvé Luong.

nist. But it is quite evident that great stretches between the villages and to the north of the Lamet district have never been touched by man. The forest, however, is sub-tropical rather than tropical. It would be more correct to say that it stands right at the transition between these two types of vegetation. A great many of the trees shed their leaves during the dry period.

Here and there the mountain slopes are covered with deep thickets of various kinds of bamboo, and in the valleys where small streams run, unusually thick-stemmed varieties of bamboo grow. However, the forests as a rule seem to be quite young, which is due to the swiddens of the Lamet. Almost everywhere the forest has at some time been cut down, and one sees many variations in these forests which are an indication of their age. As a rule the new forest is very thick and deep, and difficult to penetrate. However, grassy plains covered with *Imperata* and other varieties of grass are seldom to be seen in the Lamet district. Otherwise they are rather common in other parts of the Annamese mountain chain, and this coheres with the character of the different methods of forest clearing used by the various tribes. I shall explain this more fully in the chapter on farming.



Fig. 2. Village scenery.

In the mountain clefts, as on the damp slopes, there is often an abundance of wild bananas, and on the open spaces there are a great many kinds of herbs which the Lamet know how to use for different purposes. But within the forests, on the contrary, the lower vegetation is rather scarce, owing to the fact that the trees give too much shade. Young palms and pandanus struggle towards the light. The few herbs to be found consist partly of plants resembling ginger. But to a larger degree the ground between the trees lies bare.

Animal life in the forests is plentiful as regards all kinds of mammals and birds. Deer and roe, and in places even the big wild oxen *gaur* (*Bos gaurus*) appear in large numbers. Two kinds of bear are also to be seen there. Wild elephants have existed in olden times, but nowadays only one or two small herds are to be found. Monkeys and wild pigs are especially numerous, and are among the animals one sees most. A rich bird fauna exists, great numbers of wild fowl, chickens, pheasants, and other edible birds. The Lamet are not bothered much by biting insects up on the mountain tops, but these insects can be extremely troublesome down in the valleys for both animals and human beings. This is especially the case in regard to a kind of winged insect resembling the gadfly, which is

really a plague during the hot spring months. During the rainy season there come such endless numbers of small stinging gnats, as well as the numerous *Anopheles*-mosquitos, that one is obliged to protect the cattle by means of smoking. During this period it is also necessary to protect oneself while sleeping with extra fine-meshed mosquito netting so that the tiny gnats cannot get in. However, people living up on the mountain-tops are not troubled in this way as much as those down in the valleys. During the rainy period also, swarms of leeches creep forth and fasten on both humans and animals. A short walk in the forest is enough for collecting several leeches on one's legs.

The Lamet live in villages which usually lie at an average height of about 1 000 m. above sea-level. It is perhaps more correct to say between 500 and 1 500 m. The settled tracts are concentrated on the mountain crests, and one must often make a rather troublesome climb up the slopes of the mountains before reaching the dwellings. The villages as a rule are situated on the very ridge of the mountains, or just below them. The situation depends on accessibility to water, and therefore a village must lie near a stream which can supply enough water during the dry season as well. This water supply thus runs far below the mountain ridge where the village lies.

This placing of villages according to access to water is quite a characteristic thing, and as a matter of comparison it can be of interest to point out another case characteristic of the Yao tribes. In contrast to the Lamet, the Yao place their villages far down a mountain slope, long below the hills, so that the water from these can be caught up by means of long water conduits made of bamboo tubes. In this way water can be led right into the houses.

The Lamet themselves say that the reason for their building up on heights is fear for malaria, which is frequent in the valleys. As a matter of fact, they do not call it malaria, but say that there are dangerous spirits which are the cause of sickness. Another factor which probably plays an important part, is that during the damp part of the year the mountains are much more pleasant to live in than the valleys.

The Lamet district covers about 2 000 sq. km. According to the figures I have obtained from the French authorities, the Lamet number 5 795 persons who are distributed among 103 villages. Thus there is a density of population of 2.9, that is to say, one inhabitant to every 0.346 sq. km., which is undeniably a very thin population. According to J. Sion, the figures for the whole of Laos are 4 persons per sq. km., and for the mountain

TABLE 2. Lamet Villages in the Province of Haut-Mékong.

Name of village	No. of houses	No. of persons	No. of persons per houses	Name of village	No. of houses	No. of persons	No. of persons per houses
Sanong Pot	12	58	4.83	Xang Noi	3	11	3.67
Nheng Teum	3	10	3.33	Xang Kang	4	17	4.25
Nheng Phreum	14	58	4.14	Xang Luang	18	78	4.33
Mok Souk Luang ..	10	68	6.80	Pang Nam Long tai	11	53	4.82
Mok Souk Panghay	14	90	6.43	Pang Nam Long			
Mokala Panghay...	21	141	6.7	neua	7	36	5.14
Pang Say	8	37	4.63	Tup Noi	15	76	5.06
Mokala Luang	10	59	5.90	Nam Nga neua	17	62	3.65
Ban Noi	5	30	6.00	Nam Toun tai	14	48	3.43
Pang Salao	12	63	6.25	Chom Kéo	13	51	3.92
Nam Xeo	14	50	3.57	Toup Luang	16	59	3.69
Lakon Namkalay				Hok Het	10	63	6.30
tai	13	48	3.69	Pang Nam Ngao ..	9	62	6.88
Lakon Namkalay				Nam Le	6	19	3.17
neua	22	88	4.00				
Ban Hok	15	67	4.47	Sot Luang	33	104	3.15
Lakon Nam Sathone	32	116	3.61	Sot Noi	38	148	3.89
Satoun tai	20	97	4.86	Kiou Ome	8	29	3.63
Satoun neua	30	111	3.70	Nam Kane	19	71	3.74
Nam Ta Ngony ...	5	34	6.80	Nam Phe	18	72	4.00
Mok Hok	2	12	6.00	Pang Pôt	18	87	4.83
Mokahang neua ...	24	120	5.00	Pang Hok	5	23	4.60
Mok Som Mo	22	99	4.50	Pang Nam Ngeun	10	60	6.00
Tene Toy	8	55	6.87	Mokahang tai	12	45	3.75

Lamet Villages in the Chiefdom of Luangprabang.

Ban Thine	10	43	4.30	Sa Ko	10	49	4.90
Khok Ngaeu	11	49	4.45	Ta Kheang	17	66	3.88
Khok Noi	6	28	4.66	Nam Phoung	8	26	3.25
Ka Nay	13	52	4.00	La-Ang	21	70	3.33
Khing Ngaeu	15	53	3.53	Chouk-Louk	20	89	4.45
Khing Noi	14	69	4.93	Kaléng Theng	14	50	3.57
Ka Toy	11	49	4.45	Lakhay	11	27	2.45
Kha Nhaeu	10	45	4.50	Lam-Ling	21	60	2.86
Saminh Noi	8	33	4.13	Ka Lang	23	59	2.57
Kalay Noi	7	30	4.29	Mokala	22	90	4.09
Kalay Nhaeu	7	30	4.29	Takou-Noi	13	43	3.31
Saminh Nhaeu	10	47	4.70	Takou-Nhaeu	19	70	3.60
Kalong Nhaeu	9	31	3.44	Laking	12	46	3.83

Name of village	No. of houses	No. of persons	No. of persons per houses	Name of village	No. of houses	No. of persons	No. of persons per houses
Khanong	9	45	5.00	Saluang-Salay	23	94	4.09
Kham-Phong	5	14	2.80	Chakho	27	71	2.63
La-Ang-Thaeu	18	67	3.72	Pang Khaning King-			
Phou-Soung-Kalay	8	30	3.75	mok	37	113	3.00
La-Ang-Kang	7	24	3.43	Phét pang lamchuan	25	107	4.28
Lang-Taeu	6	30	5.00	Phine	27	82	3.04
Kalay	6	29	4.83	Ka-Yang	22	73	3.32
Poun-Houn	11	37	3.36	Thong-Mang	15	44	2.93
Ka-Yo	8	20	2.50	La-Choum	11	52	4.72
Kapay-Neua	9	59	6.56	Oun-Tieng	20	54	2.70
Lang-Neua	9	37	4.11	Phou-Lom	16	54	3.38
Pang	8	27	3.75	Phou-Huane	21	78	3.70
Chèng-Neua	8	34	4.25	Kone-Huane	11	45	4.09
Chèng Teua	8	35	4.38	Ka-Ye	25	83	3.32
La-Ang-Neua	6	25	4.17	Ta-Loui	23	88	3.83
Pong-Ang-Neua	9	30	3.33	Khaning-Lamet	27	85	3.15
Kapay-Kang	4	17	4.25	Ka-Tim	31	103	3.32

area of Upper Laos, less than 2 persons per sq. km.¹⁾ The quotient for the density of population for the Lamet should thus be not so very little, if we compare it with these figures. Of course all statistics in these regions are only approximate, since there is no really exact census in existence. In order to obtain real contrasts, one can turn to Indochina's coastal plains, for example the Tonkin delta, where the figures are calculated to be 430 to one sq. km.²⁾ But it is also a fact that about 4/5ths of the population of Indochina live on the coastal slopes, that is to say, on only 1/10th of the whole surface.

Density of settlement in the Lamet district, that is to say, the relation of the space occupied by villages to the entire surface, is one village to 19.42 sq. km. This is the same as a square whose side measures 4.42 km., or equal to the surface of a circle with a 2.48 km. radius. The average distance between villages is thus nearly 5 km., which is considerable in the difficult mountain territory, since a Lamet person carrying a normal amount of packing cannot cover more than 3 km. an hour.

¹⁾ Jules Sion: *Asie des moussons. Géographie Universelle*, T. IX: 2. Paris, 1929, pp. 446 and 439.

²⁾ Pierre Gourou: *Les paysans du delta tonkinois*. Paris, 1936.

The villages are rather small. The Lamet have a total of 1 462 dwellings, which is an average of 14.2 houses to a village. The largest village has 38 houses, and the smallest 2. In one case a man lives alone, but he belongs to a village nearby. The village which has the greatest population is Sot Noi (see map in fig. 3), having 148 inhabitants, and that which has least is Nhung Teum, having only 10. The average number of inhabitants to a village is only 56.3.

The relation of the population of the villages to the number of houses gives us a quotient of the number of people living in each house, that is, the size of the household or house group. The mean quotient is 3.96 and the variation is 2.50—6.87.

These figures give rise to a few questions. Why are the villages not larger? Is there an optimum for a Lamet village? What factors play a part in this? Why are the house groups in certain villages larger than others, and what factors are the cause of this?

Finding answers to these questions is something which only partially concerns this chapter, but I shall do so in order to have all these figures together in one place. In order to explain the various questions, I must also make use of results reached in other chapters in this book. Therefore the reader should return to this account after reading through the book. It is usually the case regarding sociological material, that everything must be viewed in relationship to everything else, therefore one is obliged to make cross references and repetitions.

Thus to begin with, we ask: Is it possible for a people who cultivate forest clearings and who live in surroundings such as the Lamet do, to have larger villages? What is the maximum of agglomeration? Unfortunately we have no other figures in regard to other peoples in Further India with a similar technique of production. Mills reports that villages among the Lhota Naga can have as many as 350 houses.¹⁾ This tribe has the same sort of swidden cultivation as the Lamet, the difference being only that the Lhota Naga use their clearings two years in succession instead of only one as the Lamet do. Besides, the whole Naga village co-operates in the cultivation of only one swidden. The Lamet are divided into swidden groups made up of a few families. Therefore, the size of the village seems to have no direct connection with the method of cultivation.

The Lamet do not return to their old swiddens until after 12–15 years. If we take 12 years as a basis, a man needs 12 times as much space as the

¹⁾ J. P. Mills: *The Lhota Nagas*. London, 1922, p. 22.

swidden he usually cultivates. According to a survey I made of the area covering a group of swiddens (chap. 13), an able-bodied person should clear an average of 0.457 hectares. The figure for an ordinary person, we could say a consuming person, including children and old people who do not work, is 0.284 hectares. These figures are naturally only approximate, since they are the average of only five families. One person, therefore, needs 12 times $0.284 = 3.41$ ha. The largest Lamet village has 148 inhabitants, and if one takes a village of 150 as a basis, it requires a space of 512 hectares. The maximum distance from village to swiddens, that is, when these lie farthest away at the outskirts of the village territory, is thus the same as the radius of a circle covering 512 hectares $= 1.28$ km.¹⁾ This would then be the greatest distance required for transporting rice from the swidden to the village, and is, as a matter of fact, double the distance $= 2.56$ km. It takes about an hour to walk this distance with heavy, nearly full rice baskets. But since the contents of one basket lasts a large household of 8 persons or so about a week, the time per day is minimal, and therefore is of no importance, especially since the Lamet women always take home one basket at the time, and go therefore seldom all the way to the barns. This refers to the Lower Lamet, whose barns are placed near the swiddens, that is, far from the village. Among the Upper Lamet the barns lie right near the villages, but the distance for transportation would be the same in either case, whether one bears the rice at once to the village, or places it first in the barns near the swiddens, then gradually conveying it to the village. Neither the distance nor the factor of time can be of any importance here, and therefore we need not make a time study of the work of the women to see what part transportation takes of their other activities. To be sure, I have tried to value this, but it is impossible to find any approximative worth in it. With the rough survey I have made of the situation, however, the time of transportation seems to be of little importance.

If the Lamet had large villages like the Naga, the distance for transportation would naturally have been of some importance, and then it could be calculated that a maximum limit existed. Let us suppose that a village has 1 500 inhabitants, then the maximum distance to the swiddens would be 4 km., which is a long way to walk with a heavy rice basket, weighing perhaps as much as the bearer himself. But the way in which the work of the family is organized must also be taken into account. Perhaps there is one woman who carries rice, while another in the family takes care of the

¹⁾ Compare the average distance p. 40.



Fig. 3. Swidden and watch house. Mokala Panghay.

cooking, etc. Now, if this large figure concerned a Naga village, we must not forget that the Naga have another system, since they return to their swiddens after a few years, and this coupled with the fact that they use a swidden two years in succession results in the fact that the distance of transportation is considerably lessened.

Therefore I reach the conclusion that the size of the Lamet villages cannot depend on such technical factors as I have set forth. According to these alone, the villages could be much larger. Therefore there must be another reason for the size of the Lamet villages. I should like to suppose that the reason for this is most likely to be found in their organization of their society and their system of politics. As we shall see in the following chapter, a tendency towards the division of villages exists, due to the fact that the power in the villages lies in the hands of the house groups, and that the factors holding these together within the village are not sufficiently strong. The private interest of the house groups are greater than the common interest of the village. A difference crops up between these house groups, and the village is divided. There is no really strong authority for the village as a whole in the form of chief or other social category. However, this fact alone is not enough, for we must remember that the access to land is great, since the frequency of settlement of 19.42 sq. km. per village is considerably greater than the Lamet need. To this can be added something else, their system of land

tenure. Among the Lower Lamet there are no special boundaries for the property of the village, while the case is the contrary among the Upper Lamet. Perhaps this is why it is more difficult for the latter to split up their villages. Unfortunately, this is something which I did not have occasion to investigate, since my calculations have not been made until after my return from my expedition. According to my belief, the reason for the smallness of the villages can be found in a combination of these last-named factors.

The last question concerned the size of the house groups. The mean quotient was 3.96, and if we look at tables 2 and 4, we see the maximum also, 3.6–4.5, about the average. 46 villages lie below the average, and 58 above.

We notice also that the largest villages — over 27 houses = 9 villages — all lie below the average, that is to say, they have small house groups. Unfortunately, I cannot place the figures in the tables on a map, since I do not know the exact situation in every case, owing to the fact that there are not any good maps to be had. Besides, I have not visited all the villages. However, I am well acquainted with these nine villages, and I know that all of them belong to the Upper Lamet, and that from these there is a steady exodus of man-power to Siam. For reasons which I shall explain in Chapter 16, this emigration has contributed considerably to the dividing of extended families into biological families, each one living in a house of its own. This naturally refers to the small as well as the large villages. The question is, why do not these larger villages also split up, and as answer I refer to the suggestion mentioned previously in connection with the influence of the system of land tenure.

Both villages with the largest population — Sot Noi and Mokala Panghay — are interesting to compare, since they are contrasts to one another. The former is typical of the Upper Lamet, and the latter of the Lower (cf. p. 350). In the first case many houses with small households, in the other few houses with large households. In the one case a village on the caravan route, with a steady emigration of man power, and in the other a village living "in the old style," without loss of man power.

The house groups which lie above the average are to be found in villages of less than 26 houses, and among these the frequency is greatest in villages of 9–10 houses = 12 villages, and 7–8 houses = 8 villages. The largest house groups are to be found in 5 villages of 5–10 houses.

Table 3 completes table 2, and here we see that the maximum lies in villages of 50–60 persons, that is, about the average of 56.3 inhabitants to

TABLE 3. Number of Villages Grouped According to Existing Houses and Persons.

No. of houses	Number of villages with the following inhabitants														Total
	10-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70-79	80-89	90-99	100-109	110-119	120-129	130-139	140-149	
1-2	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
3-4	4	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	4
5-6	2	4	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	9
7-8	—	5	8	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	14
9-10	—	—	3	5	2	4	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	14
11-12	—	1	1	5	3	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	11
13-14	—	—	—	3	5	1	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	10
15-16	—	—	—	1	3	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	6
17-18	—	—	—	—	—	3	2	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	6
19-20	—	—	—	—	1	—	2	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	5
21-22	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	1	2	—	—	—	—	1	8
23-24	—	—	—	—	1	1	—	1	1	—	—	1	—	—	4
25-26	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	1	—	—	—	—	2
27-28	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	3
29-30	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	1
31-32	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1	1	—	—	—	2
33-34	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	1
35-36	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
37-38	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	1	2
39-40	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total	7	10	15	14	16	11	9	7	5	3	3	1	—	2	103

TABLE 4. Number of Villages According to Average Size of Households.

No. of houses in village	Average no. of people in one house					Total of villages
	2.45-3.5	3.6-4.5	4.6-5.5	5.6-6.5	6.6-6.87	
1-2	—	—	—	1	—	1
3-4	1	2	1	—	—	4
5-6	2	1	4	1	1	9
7-8	3	8	2	—	1	14
9-10	2	3	3	3	3	14
11-12	2	5	3	1	—	11
13-14	2	6	1	1	—	10
15-16	3	2	1	—	—	6
17-18	—	5	1	—	—	6
19-20	1	3	1	—	—	5
21-22	3	4	—	—	1 ¹⁾	8
23-24	1	2	1	—	—	4
25-26	1	1	—	—	—	2
27-28	3	—	—	—	—	3
29-30	—	1	—	—	—	1
31-32	1	1	—	—	—	2
33-34	1	—	—	—	—	1
35-36	—	—	—	—	—	—
37-38	1	1	—	—	—	2
Total	27	45	18	7	6	103

¹⁾ Mokala Panghay.

a village. If we go above the maximum, the number of villages diminishes rapidly, and below it, the number diminishes slowly. On the other hand, the average of 14.2 houses to a village does not lie in the maximum, for this consists of villages of 7-10 houses = 28 villages, which seems to be the most popular or usual size. Within this group also, the average size of the villages is shifted a little to villages having 30-50 persons, which of course must also correspond in the same way with the figures for the house groups in these villages.

In conclusion I must add one thing more, and that is in regard to civilization in general. The civilization of a people can to a certain degree be said to depend on its type of structure and its density of population. The greater the agglomeration, the greater are the possibilities for differentiation within the civilization. The reverse, a few people divided up into independent entities which do not co-operate in any great degree, cannot

support a complicated organization with many kinds of functionaries and occupations in the same way as a strongly differentiated culture. The villages of the Lamet must be viewed in this light. Their civilization is relatively "primitive." There are few officials, there is little variety of occupation, the standard of living is practically uniform and the economy virtually self-contained. Perhaps this sounds strange, but if we assume that their villages were once larger for a reasonable period of time, so that they had the opportunity of developing various kinds of occupations and a series of different functionaries within the organization of the community, and that later on a diminishing of the population took place, this would surely be noticeable in their culture, especially if this had occurred more or less recently. In this connection I can give only one example of comparison from another tribe in another part of the globe, namely the Canella Indians in northern Brazil. They had a very complicated social organization, with a series of different functionaries accompanied by complicated ceremonies.¹⁾ Nimuendajú told me that it was impossible for the Canella to continue this social organization, since there were too few people. The population of the tribe had reduced considerably. According to what P. Radin told me, a parallel to this is to be found in certain Californian tribes, who have a rather complicated organization, in spite of the small number of inhabitants. In his opinion, these tribes were once considerably larger in order to have supported such an organization. In such cases as this, one could speak of the need of greater agglomeration, for here the balance between civilization and density of population has been disturbed.

If we once more compare the Lamet and the Naga, we return to the same question, but with the latter tribe as the point of departure. Why have they such large villages? Here also, it cannot be a matter only of distance of transportation, since this only limits the size. The difference must lie rather in other reasons. This difference is for the most in regard to whole cultures, which in their turn are connected with a long historical development, about which we know very little or nothing. Apart from historical reasons, however, we could compare two such different types of civilizations as those of the Naga and the Lamet, and their bearing on organization and density of population. Through such a study, I believe one could draw quite interesting conclusions, if one thus compared differ-

¹⁾ Curt Nimuendajú and Robert H. Lowie: The dual organizations of the Kamko'-kamekra (Canella) of northern Brazil. *American Anthropologist*, n. s., vol. 39, 1937.



Fig. 4. The southern village street. Mokala Panghay.

ences of culture between different peoples within the range of similar methods of production and similar physical surroundings.

If then, within the same geographical territory, one proceeded to compare, for example the civilization of swidden cultivators with that of a people who irrigate, one would surely come across still more important differences, and even see what an important role irrigation has played. From the very beginning one can assume quite definitely that such a technique must have been of vast importance for the uniting and organizing of great territories. However, I hope to develop this idea by means of renewed field research and study in the future.

Naturally, it is not only the economical, physical and political factors which draw people together in villages and larger communities. We must take other human factors into consideration, such as the need of mutual help, common protection, exchange through marriage, and above all co-existence in general.

Therefore, by means of this analysis we can presume that the Lamet culture is one of "relative equilibrium," if we take into consideration only the question of population and its bearing on culture in general. By this I mean that the internal factors existing in the organization of the Lamet's communities only split villages and family groups, but on the other hand do not change the culture in its entirety. A change in the density of population, a new idea in the shape of an invention, a principle of organization or jurisdiction, a new religious idea, etc., which is accepted by the community, would bring about a change in culture, whether this idea were external or internal in origin in regard to the community in question.

However, no category of internal character came to my notice during my short stay among the Lamet, but on the contrary, external ideas, that is, things borrowed from other cultures, were apparent. In the concluding chapter I shall point out how present social influences are assimilated and accomodated according to the social "tectonic lines" — to use a geological expression — which already exist in the social organization of the Lamet.

CHAPTER 4.

The Village and its Buildings

The villages of the Upper and those of the Lower Lamet are planned differently. Among the Upper Lamet the houses are placed somewhat irregularly. Somewhere in the middle is to be found the men's or community house, or *éong ying* (*éog yig*) as it is called in Lamet, on an open square. From this square a village street leads right through the village, and as we see in the plan of Sot Noi (fig. 5), the houses are arranged to some extent with the verandas facing this street. But this is not always the case in other villages. Just outside the village and on both sides on it, lie the barns. Entrance gates are seldom seen among the Upper Lamet, and are put up occasionally in connection with certain religious ceremonies which the whole village takes part in. On the slopes in the outskirts of the village lie small fenced-in gardens (t), where vegetables, bananas and fruit trees, etc., are raised. Here and there in the village small private *éong* or sheds are also to be seen (c).

On the map of Sot Noi, we see three small paths marked with parallel dotted lines. One of these which runs north of the village along its entire length, is the caravan trail between Tafá and Vieng Phoukha. The other two lead partly to watering places, and partly to the swiddens out in the forest.

The village's land lies round about it in the mountains. It is a huge district, where the inhabitants of the village clear their swiddens. Among the Upper Lamet this district is well bounded by natural boundary marks, such as valleys, streams, mountain ridges, etc. (see further chap. 11).

The villages of the Upper Lamet are often very dirty as compared with those of the Lower, who sweep theirs often and keep them tidy.

Among the Lower Lamet I got the impression that the ideal type of village resembled a kraal (fig. 8). The houses stand in a circle round an open place with the community house in the middle of it. By means of a village street (*tugmür*) the village is divided into two halves. However, I saw only a few villages with this ideal plan, and it is evident that it can be carried out only where there is level ground. However the tendency exists in all other villages.

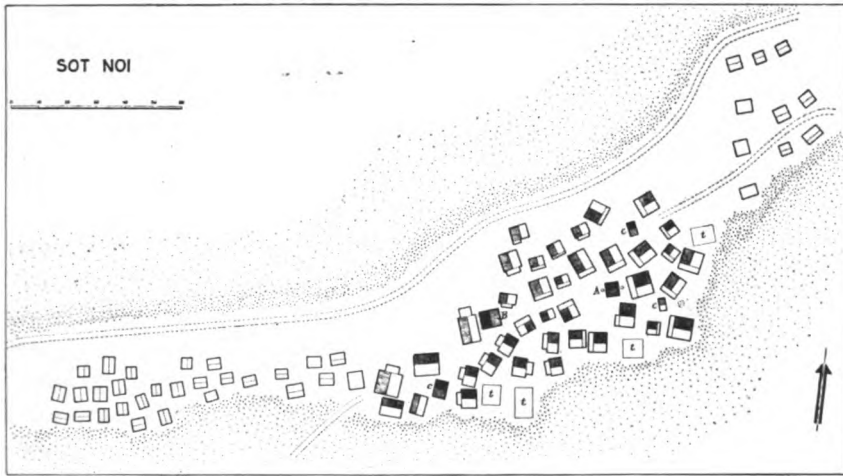


Fig. 5. Village plan of Sot Noi. The village is situated on a ridge. The light filled-in squares in the middle are dwellings. At both ends of the village are the barns. The path that goes north of the village is a caravan trail. t = gardens, c = private còng, A = the new còng ying, B = the old còng ying used as a rest house.

In this district the barns are placed, not just outside of the village like those of the Upper Lamet, but often far away in the forests. Once in a while they may be seen nearby, but in that case they are not all of the barns belonging to the village, but only a small group of them. Therefore it happens sometimes that when one is walking through the forest one can come across such a group of barns in an opening in the forest. The place resembles a dead and deserted village. The barns of the Upper Lamet are permanent buildings, while those of the Lower Lamet are sometimes movable. Placing the barns outside the village has some connection with the danger of fire. Not seldom it happens that the villages catch fire, and in such a situation it is a good thing to have the barns in safety.

The land belonging to the village is not especially bounded like that of the Upper Lamet. A man is free to have his swiddens where he will, even in the neighborhood of another village, but on the other hand it is evident that he would try to place them as near as possible to his own village. The only boundary mark I saw between the villages of the Lower Lamet was a kind of spear-like pole by the wayside. But this was a boundary mark for work on the roads connecting the villages. On one side of this pole (*natah*) the clearing of the road was taken care of by one village, and on the other side of it the work was left to the other village.



Fig. 6. Barns quite outside Pouvé Luong.



Fig. 7. Barns far from the village. Mokala Panghay. The poles in the foreground after removed barns.

I have not succeeded in finding out what the reason is for this difference in regard to the planning of the villages of the Upper and the Lower Lamet. It is something that concerns not only the villages, but a great many other things as well, and it is possible that this difference dates far back in time.

One could perhaps suppose that the two groups of Lamet differ from each other to such a degree that they are really two different tribes. However, they consider themselves to be the same people, and in spite of a certain difference in dialect, they have practically similar customs.

Unfortunately, I have not made a real map-drawing of a village of the Lower Lamet which I would consider as belonging to the ideal type. I have often come across these villages while on the road, when it was impossible to stop and make a satisfactory map. Instead, I shall give a description of the village Mokala Panghay, which I surveyed as carefully as possible.

First, a word about the name of the village. Panghay means watch house on a swidden, and Mokala = the Ala mountain. This name suggests that the village has grown up on a swidden, where there was first a watch house. I shall return to this at the end of the chapter.

Mokala Panghay lies one and a half day's distance by foot from Tafá, southwest of the latter, and about half a day's distance by foot from the Nam Tha. The nearest villages are Ban Noi and Mokala Luang. It is only a couple of hours by foot to both of these villages.

Mokala Panghay is not an old village, being only about 50 years old. The inhabitants of this place once lived in a village which does not exist any more, at about an hour's distance by foot, and which was called Mokala Hang. Old fruit trees can still be seen in this deserted village, and now and then the inhabitants of Mokala Panghay visit the old place of residence when the fruit season is in. Before that time the village is said to have lain nearer the caravan trail, about 50 km. from Houeisai. There we could still see remains of rattan building piles in the forest. But the old village site was entirely overgrown with thick forest, and no one could remember when people inhabited this village. Many knew only that it was a very long time ago, and had heard their forefathers talk of the place. It is quite a removal from this old dwelling site to Mokala Hang. The distance is about that covered by foot in half a day. I have not been able to discover any reasons for all these removals. No one could remember why the inhabitants had moved, and I got no other answer than this to all my questioning. During the time that Mokala Hang was populated, it became at one time deserted for a few years, and the people moved to Nam Lang, a Khmu village which is no longer in existence. But when the

latter ceased to exist, the Lamet moved back to Mokala Hang and some Khmu followed along. On the other hand, the rest of the population of Nam Lang moved to another village which now bears the name of Nam Peuk.

When Mokala Hang was deserted for the second time, the village was divided into two, the one Mokala Panghay, and the other Mokala Luang. The Luang village was then the larger of the two, but it was later divided again in 1924 by a few families leaving and founding the village of Ban Noi. Still another division has taken place again in 1934, when one family moved away from Ban Noi (cf. chap. 6).

The path that leads to Mokala Panghay from the south is quite well worn, since it connects the ancient caravan trail along the Nam Ngao with the river route of the Nam Tha. The Lu people go that way sometimes, and Chinese smuggling caravans as well, and possibly it has been used a very long time by Laotic merchants who came up the Nam Tha in their canoes in order to sell their wares in the Lamet district. Mokala Panghay lies only a couple of hundred meters from this path, and right at the fork of the road, where one leaves the caravan trail and goes down to the village, the inhabitants have set up a gateway. It has a fence on both sides, this being only 4 meters long and made of plaited bamboo with sharpened ends pointing outwards. Besides, there is a wooden spear on each side, about one meter in length, and thrust obliquely in the ground with the points directed outwards towards the caravan trail. Wooden swords are fastened onto the gateway itself, which consists only of a couple of heavy posts with crosspieces fastened at the top. On the crosspieces moreover, rest sharpened bamboo reeds, each one double-pointed, and also a *talā* (*talē*), a kind of hexagonally plaited, or star-shaped device made of bamboo splints and intended to hold back evil spirits. In fact, this is the purpose of the whole gateway, for the Lamet believe that dangerous spirits go along the caravan trail, and they are afraid of these coming into the village. When the spirits see all the sharpened spikes, spears and other things, they become afraid and do not dare to enter the path leading to the village.

When we have passed this first village gateway, we come soon to an open place where remains of old barns are to be seen, and then it is only a few meters to the next village gateway (fig. 9). This is constructed just like the previous one with the same magic defence paraphernalia. On the *talā* above the gateway lies also the whitened skull of a dog, which at some time was sacrificed to the spirit of the village gateway. In the case of newly made *talē* being placed on the entrance to a village, it means that entrance is forbidden, and then no stranger is allowed to come into the

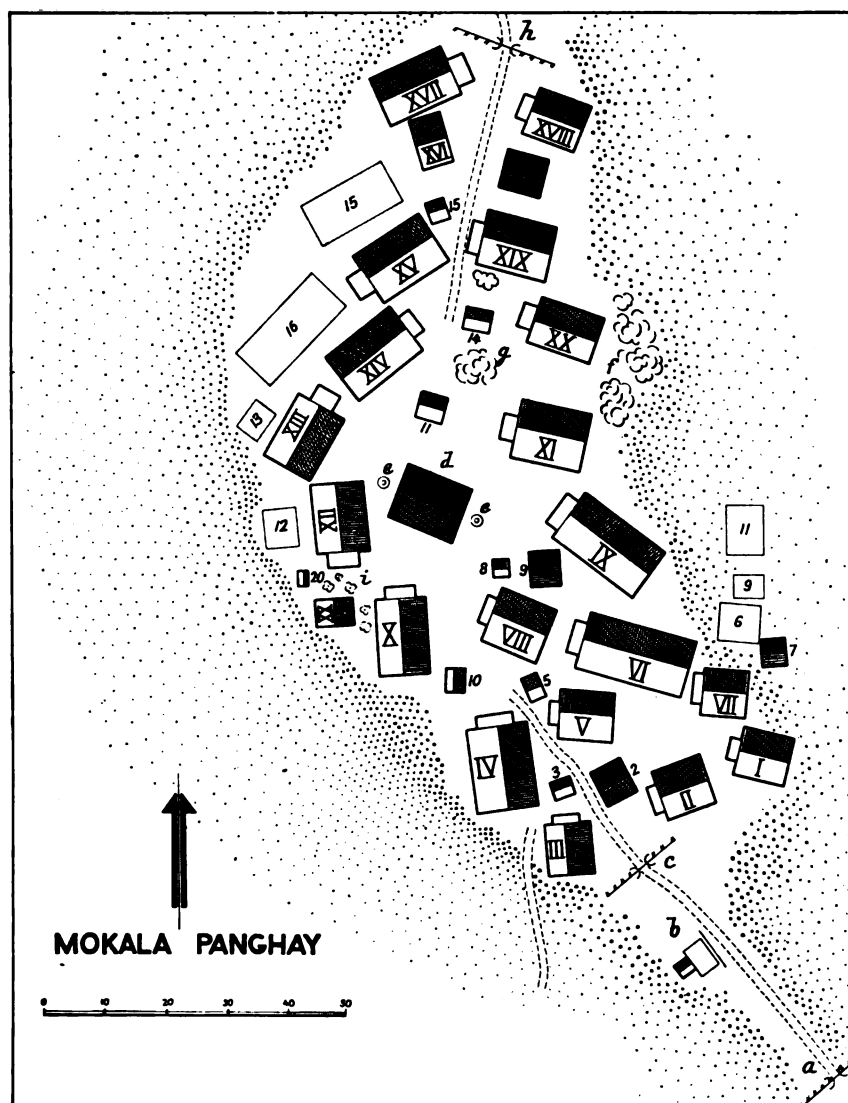


Fig. 8. Village plan of Mokala Panghay. The dwellings are marked with Roman numerals — the same as the house numbers in table 5 — and the other houses and the gardens belonging to these have corresponding Arabic numerals. d = *cong ying*, e = sacrifice pole. The dark filled-in spaces 2, 7, 9, etc., are private *cong*. a, c, h = village gates. b = shrine for *phi yakün*. The open rectangles are gardens. f = orchard with areca palms and pomelo trees belonging to XI, g = tamarind tree belonging to XIII, i = orchard belonging to XII.



Fig. 9. The second village gate of Mokala Panghay.

village. This is done because of fear for evil spirits who can possibly have attached themselves to a stranger who has come from the outer world.

On the right side of the open place between the two gateways there is an altar in the shape of a little house. Here sacrifices are made to *phi yakun* during certain ceremonies connected with the cultivation of the fields (see pp. 218 seqq.).

The chief in Mokala Panghay related that in olden times there was a double row of bamboo fence (*lār*) surrounding the entire village. Moreover, this fence was supplied with outward pointing bamboo

spears and points. In order to better protect themselves against attack, if one expected enemies, they laid tiny splinters of sharpened bamboo in the paths so that the attacking warriors should get them in their feet. The chief had never experienced this himself, but had heard it spoken of when he was young. These tiny bamboo splinters are known of in other parts of Further India, and in Australia as well.

Not until one passes the innermost village gate can the village be seen, lying on a sharply sloping ridge which faces north. A central village street goes right through the village to the north entrance. Where it ends there is another village gateway or rather a fence of bamboo tips on each side of the path. This fence is called *kum kən-cay* = fence before the gate. In the middle of the village there is an open square where the *cong ying* or community house is situated. The dwellings do not face in any special direction. They are all built on tall piles in contrast to the community house which is built more or less directly on the ground.

Here and there in the village there are a number of smaller houses, which are private work-sheds and which are also called *cong*. In distinction to the community house, *cong ying* = village *cong*, these other *cong* are called after the name of the owner, for example *cong Ai Nhi* = Ai Nhi's *cong*. On the map, fig. 8, the dwellings are indicated with Roman numerals, and the private *cong* belonging to them are indicated with corresponding Arabic numerals. We notice that these private *cong* are



Fig. 10. Areca palms belonging to the *xəmiā*, Mokala Panghay. Some parts of the fenced-in gardens are seen. The small naked trees are wild tea.

always in the vicinity of the house of the owner. In several places in the village we see pigsties, where the pigs are shut in for the night. The larger dwellings do not always have special houses for the pigs, but have the sties built under the veranda of the dwelling.

On the outskirts of the village lie little gardens enclosed with bamboo fences in order to prevent the pigs of the village from entering and spoiling them. Bananas and vegetables are raised there, and besides these, fruit trees and areca palms are planted within the village and on its outskirts.

Since the village slopes decidedly, logs have been laid here and there in a horizontal position to the slope, and the ground here filled and levelled so that something like terraces have been formed. This has been done in order to prevent the rains from washing away the earth during the heaviest rain season. During this time the whole village is soaked, and becomes slippery and unpleasant to walk in. However, because of the slope, it is never so sticky and marshy there as in the Thai villages down in the valleys where the ground is level and where cobblestones must be placed between the houses in order to have something to walk on during the rainy period. A little below the mountain top where the village is situated, there are two small streams which run down the mountain cleft. Here the people of the village fetch their water. The rills have been dammed, and the water flows out into a large bamboo tube, which is placed about a meter above ground level, so that one can comfortably fill a water pail, and also take a shower. Beside the more abundant of the two water sources stands a long pole (*tuōr*), at the top of which hangs a three-cornered piece of plaited work. This pole is erected to the spirit of water.

The Buildings in the Village

In the villages there are buildings of the following kinds: dwellings (*n'ā*) of different construction, *éong*, pigsties, and *éong ying*. Since the barns do not stand on the site of the village itself, I shall deal with them in another connection.

Fig. 13 shows a schematic plan of an ordinary dwelling of the Lower Lamet. Every house has a veranda at one gable, and sometimes also a second smaller veranda under the opposite gable. The front veranda has a flight of steps leading to the house. Thus we come first to that part of the veranda which lies under the roof. To the left of the entrance of the house there is usually a mortar made by hollowing out the trunk of a tree. A long wooden plug can be seen on the under side of the mortar, and this is fitted into a pole driven into the ground. We go through the doorway and find that the house consists of a single large hall. To the left of the entrance along the wall which goes the length of the house, are a number of berths made of wood or bamboo, and in front of each of these there is a hearth. Meanwhile, at the right of the entrance there is another hearth where rice is cooked, as well as some of the other food. Right next to this is a shelf made of bamboo, where the simple kitchen utensils are kept. In the middle of the wall to the right stands the altar of ancestors,



Fig. 11. Village interior, Sot Noi. In the foreground dwellings. Cut tobacco in verdigris green is seen drying in flat baskets on the roofs. In the background barns.



Fig. 12. A typical dwelling of the Lower Lamet. To the right a sacrifice pole for the village spirit.

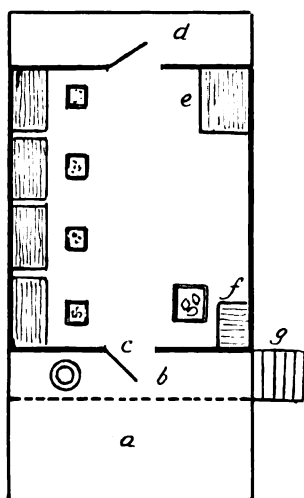


Fig. 13. Plan of a dwelling of the Lower Lamet. a = veranda, b = veranda under roof, c = entrance, d = rear veranda, e = berth for the unmarried girls, f = shelf, g = steps. To the left of the entrance c, berths along the wall. In front of every berth a hearth; the kitchen hearth in front of the shelf.

and in the far corner yet another berth intended for the house's marriageable but as yet unmarried women. However, this berth has no hearth.

The head of the family sleeps on the couch lying farthest away from the entrance. The next berth is occupied by his wife, and if there are two wives, the next two are taken. The berths nearest these are occupied by the married children and their families. Tiny children are in the habit of creeping up to their parents and sleeping on the same berths.

The hearths in front of the bunks are not used for cooking, but only as fireplaces and as a means of illumination. The flames from the fireplaces are the only illumination the house has. Their most important function, however, is to give warmth during the damp cold nights of the winter months, when the temperature can sink decidedly up on the mountain tops. However, the fires have another function, that of protecting against mosquitos and gnats. It is not so much

the flames as the smoke which fills this purpose. When I settled in Mokala Panghay, I built myself a little cottage without a fireplace, and I soon noticed how incredibly many insects came in. Larvae of all kinds fell constantly from the roof. The Lamet explained to me that it was due to the fact that I had no fire burning constantly in the house. It is very seldom one sees mosquitos in their dwellings. The dangerous malaria mosquitos usually fly quite low along ground level, and it is possible that the pile buildings are a protection from them. Most of the ordinary dwellings are built on piles high above the level of the ground.

The custom of supplying every sleeping bench with a hearth appears only among the Lower Lamet, and it is possible that there is some connection with an old tradition to explain this. When a Lamet man sleeps out in the woods, he usually sets up a simple windscreen (*tūp*) consisting of an obliquely placed roof of banana or palm leaves. He then rolls out his mat on the ground under the roof and builds a fire before him. This gives warmth and protects him from mosquitos and wild animals. It is also

possible that the fires keep away evil spirits. However, the Lamet do not like to sleep on a mat laid directly on the ground. If they have time, they prefer to build a little bamboo bunk that stands one or two decimeters above the ground. When they sleep in their watch houses out on the swidens, they also creep together as near the fire as possible. This is probably why they like to have a hearth near every berth, even in the dwellings.

The row of hearths itself forms a kind of line of demarcation, which divides the room into two parts. Only those who belong to the home, according to good breeding among the Lamet, may sit or sleep on the berths. A stranger should not intrude over this line. I have observed a similar custom among the Lao and other Thai peoples. The latter, however, have not hearths placed before the sleeping places, but these rooms are blocked off with a wall which goes the whole length of the house, and behind that no stranger is allowed. It is possible that the hearths of the Lamet also build a kind of magic means of protection against evil spirits which a stranger can possibly have in his wake. Fire is used moreover for driving out the spirit of death, and for protection against this spirit.

Furniture in the house is scanty. On the berths lie finely plaited mats made of thin strips of bamboo or wicker. These are used for sleeping on, and in the morning they are generally rolled up and laid on a shelf. Nowadays European cotton blankets are used as covers. In former times covers of bark cloth were used, but these have now fallen into disuse. However, in some villages bark cloth is still used for sleeping mats. These are made in only one village, Hong Het.

The Lamet do not like to sit directly on the floor nor on mats, but use rather a sort of stool about 2 or 3 decimeters in height. These are made of bamboo and rattan, and similar ones are also seen among most of the other tribes in North Indochina. For tables, they use a kind of tray of plaited strips of bamboo, fastened to a rattan frame. The tables are of the same height as the stools. Besides, there can be seen here and there in the dwellings, small shelves, but very few utensils or tools on them, for these are kept mostly in the *cong* of the house, or even in the community house. Near the altar of ancestors, which will be described further on, one sees small sacrifice baskets of plaited bamboo, where sacrifices to the soul of rice are placed, and sometimes a bunch of flowers (*ntri*) of a particular variety is tied to the rafters in order to entice the soul of rice to the dwelling.

As a rule the houses are kept tidy and clean, and they are swept frequently.



Fig. 14. Verandas facing the village street. Lower Lamet.

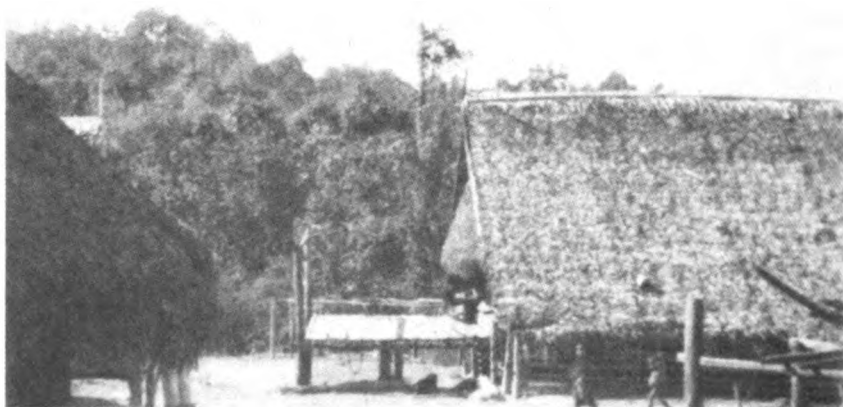


Fig. 15. Dwelling in Ban Sithoun. Lower Lamet.



Fig. 16. Village life in Sot Noi. Firewood stored under the house to be used during the rainy season. Rice is dried in the sun on a mat.

There is plenty of room under the house, and when the buffalo are led into the village, they are often tied up to the house poles. There is occasionally to be seen a pigsty under the large veranda, and there the pigs are locked in for the night. Since it can be difficult at times during the rainy season to get dry firewood, it is customary to lay up a supply under the house before the rains come (see fig. 16).

The roofs of the dwellings usually extend nearly to the ground on one side, and between the roof and the walls an accommodation of some sort is thus formed outside of the house. Here as a rule the food troughs for feeding the pigs are placed.

Some dwellings in Mokala Panghay are unusually long, as for example nos. IX and VI. These houses are occupied by families which originate from Khmu. In the back part of these houses there is a special room where the altar of ancestors is placed, and where the rice is cooked. The latter can be cooked only here, and only the women of the house are allowed to enter this room. Otherwise the houses are constructed like those of the Lamet.

The dwellings of the Lamet are held strictly sacred, and there are a great many things which are forbidden to take place within them. The reason for this is the constantly reiterated: "It can disturb the ancestor spirits."

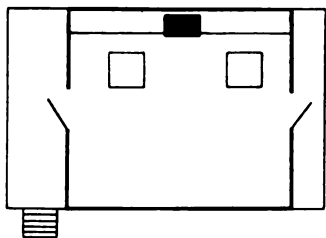


Fig. 17. Plan of a dwelling of the Upper Lamet. The open squares are hearths and the black one an ancestor shrine.

Therefore many things must be done in the workshops or the community house, that is, within the *cong*.

The dwellings I have described are the ordinary type among the Lower Lamet. If we take a look at the map of Mokala Panghay, we notice that dwellings no. XVI and XXI have no veranda, and are even much smaller than the usual houses. No. XVI is built directly on the ground and looks like a watch house on the

swidden, while No. XXI is built on piles and looks like an ordinary *cong*. These houses are more or less temporary buildings. They have been in use as a matter of fact for several years, but the families who own them have not been in a position to build permanent houses.

The dwellings of the Upper Lamet are of quite a different type (figs. 16, 17 and 51-53). They are considerably smaller than those of the Lower Lamet. Inside there are no berths, and only two hearths in the center of the room, or somewhat to the left of the entrance (fig. 17). The family sleep to the right of the entrance on mats which are laid directly on the floor. The housefather and older members lie farthest in. The altar of ancestors is placed on the left length of wall between the hearths. Thus these houses are much simpler than those of the Lower Lamet, and not at all so roomy. In spite of this, the dwellings of the Upper Lamet are used more than those of the Lower Lamet, because of the fact that the latter live on the swiddens during a good part of the year.

Here also the dwellings are built on long piles, and during the rainy season huge piles of wood are stored underneath. These supplies of wood are much more common among the Upper Lamet than the Lower, due to the fact that they remain in the villages during the rainy season.

Private cong.

The private *cong* are usually very small buildings of from 2 to 4 meters in length, and commonly built directly on the ground. Once in a while they can be seen built on piles a meter above the ground. Inside these houses there are generally one or two hearths, but no bunks or other such details in the way of furniture. They are used as storehouses for tools of various kinds, and as working shops where the men sit and make tools. In fact, the men are not allowed to do this within the dwellings. Sometimes

the *cong* are used as temporary lodgings before the actual homes are ready to live in. Every such *cong* belongs to one family, but every family does not necessarily own a private *cong*. Those who do not own one are allowed to keep their tools and sit and work in the community house. Among the Upper Lamet where the barns lie in the vicinity of the village, these may be used as workshops. The uses of the private *cong* are about the same as those of the community house, and therefore I shall discuss these further on when I describe the *cong ying*.

Pigsties.

I have already stated that most of the larger houses have pigsties placed under the verandas. However, if there is no veranda, or if a man owns so many pigs that there is not room for them under the veranda, then he builds a special house for the pigs. This house is very small, at the most 2 m. square, and is built of very thick and stable logs, so that it is impossible for a tiger to break in and take the pigs. Since there is quite a bit of space between the logs, the smaller pigs can creep in and out. The pigs are kept there only at night and are turned loose during the day. Sometimes also there is an upper story above the sty, where chicken coops can be placed. The chickens go free during the day, but are closed in for the night in small cages, which are hung either under the roof of the pigsty or that of the dwelling.

Cong ying.

In every village there is one community house. An exception for this in a way was the village of Sot Noi, which had two, one being really a lodging place for travellers. This was due to the fact that the village lay so near the caravan trail which went right through the province, and it was very common for the caravans to stay in the village over night. The community houses are built more or less directly on the ground, and are of similar construction throughout the entire Lamet district. In the following I shall describe the *cong ying* in Mokala Panghay, since I took careful measurements there and made construction drawings of this house. I refer here to figs. 20-22. The construction of the roof is the same as that of the dwellings. The heavy poles which support the roof frame are often of some sort of hardwood, for example *maidu* or another kind of wood which cannot be attacked by termites. The roof is thatched with leaves of the cane palm, and can be renewed only at certain definite times.



Fig. 18. *Cong ying* in Mokala Panghay.

There is not a nail in the entire house, for everything is fastened with strips of bamboo.

The walls consist of loosely braided work of splintered bamboo. There are generally two entrances, one at each gable of the *cong*. In the *cong* pictured in fig. 18 from Mokala Panghay, there is even a third entrance on one long side, but this is an exceptional case. The two gable openings face respectively the two halves of the village, which are formed by the street running through the village. Each opening has a double door of roughly hewn planks of dark, hard wood. A high relief in the form of a buffalo head decorates the inside of one door. The ornament is divided in two, half on each half-door (fig. 19), a crosspiece is thrust in the nose of the sculptured head to lock the doors. I have not succeeded in finding out what meaning the buffalo head has, in spite of repeated questioning. I have never

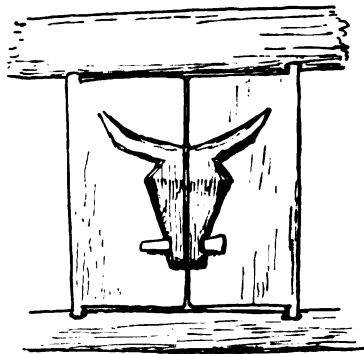


Fig. 19. The doors to the community house in fig. 18. The ornament represents a buffalo head in high relief.

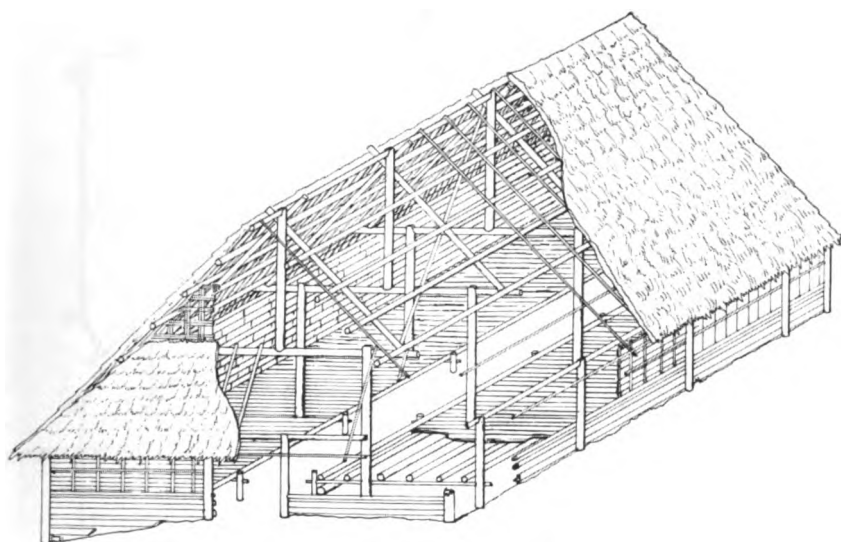


Fig. 20. Structural drawing of the house in fig. 18.

seen the like in other éong. Otherwise one often sees gable ornaments representing buffalo horns on dwellings of the Lower Lamet. Likewise, I have seen a buffalo head relief on the entrance of a barn. Some Lamet maintain that they are there only because they are beautiful. At least that is the answer one usually gets. Others, however, declare that the ancestral spirits like them. Buffalo horns and the ancestral spirits have some connection with each other, since it is the skull of a buffalo that is hung on the altar of the ancestors. Doubtless the ornament has a magic meaning, which the Lamet either do not dare to mention, or have forgotten. The ornament is quite common in many parts of southeastern Asia.

Between the two gable entrances runs a passage right through the house. On both sides of this are floors of splintered bamboo, the most usual building material in these parts. As seen in fig. 22, the floor covers only a part of the house. Generally there are to be found bunks of bamboo on the floor. Over the middle passage, two drying racks are hung up in the beams, under which fires usually burn all day long. Often big logs lie there and smoulder, and the whole passage is filled with ashes. Usually only one hearth is used, at least when not many people are present. But when a death occurs in the village, then the two halves of the village are

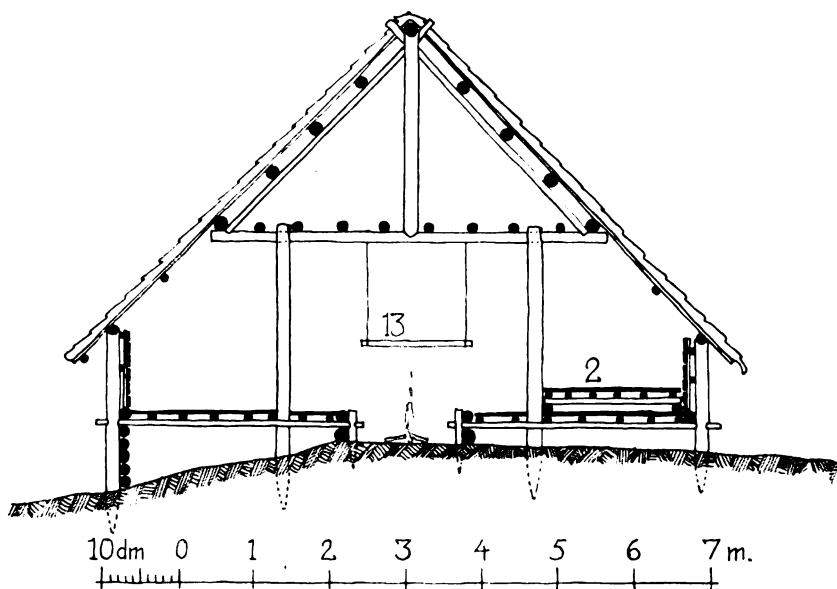


Fig. 21. Cross section of the house in fig. 18. 2 = bunk, 13 = drying rack over the hearths.

isolated from each other, and the people that belong in the half where the death occurred are not allowed to sit at the same hearth as the others. They are afraid that the spirit of death will be conveyed over. Then they use only one hearth and one entrance. Similarly, when a man goes out to lay traps or make a longer hunting trip, he must live in the community house and eat at one hearth by himself. In no way shall he mix with the other men.

In that part of the *cong* that is not floored can be seen on the one side a smithy with a double wooden pump and a forge, all of so-called Malayan type. A thick iron rod ten or more centimeters in diameter is driven in the earth and serves as an anvil. Behind the pump is a little sacrifice pole hung with ornaments. Sacrifices to the spirit of the pump are made there.

On the other side of this section hangs the big village drum. Further along the walls are usually to be seen partitions and shelves for implements (fig. 22). This part of the house is not always provided with walls. In several villages it is arranged instead like a kind of veranda. This veranda is always separated from the main room by walls one meter and a half high. Outside the gable doors and even in the *cong* there are

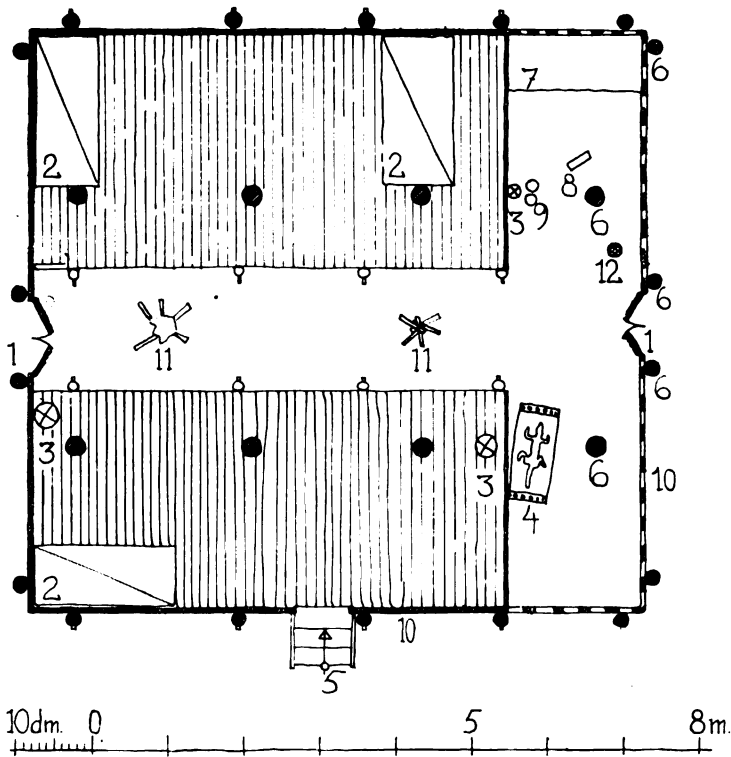


Fig. 22. Plan of the house in fig. 18. 1 = entrance, 2 = bunks, 3 = sacrifice poles for the spirit of the *cong*, 4 = village drum, 5 = steps, 6 = supporting pole, 7 = shelf, 8 = grindstone, 9 = pump for the smithy, 10 = latticed bamboo wall, 11 = hearths, 12 = anvil.

big sacrifice poles. The outer ones are intended for the *mbrög yig*, the spirit of the village, and the inner ones for the *mbrög cong*, the spirit of the *cong*. The latter appear only in the *cong* of the Lower Lamet. At the base of the sacrifice poles of the *mbrög yig*, stones are driven into the earth. On these the Lamet usually smear the blood of a pig sacrificed to the village spirit. The stones are intended to fasten the spirit to the earth. That is to say, he is supposed to live in the earth under the village district and especially under the *cong*. In the same way the souls of the dead are fastened with stones. Thus it is arranged in the same way as that of the village spirit whose house is the *cong* ying itself. He lives in the whole village square, but is particularly concentrated in the ground under the *cong*.

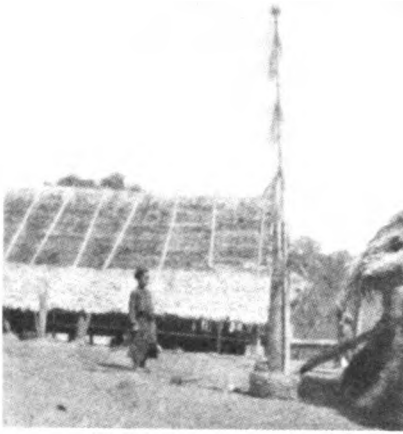


Fig. 23.
Sacrifice pole for the village spirit.

The purely technical details of construction in the community house are to be found again in other buildings in the village, but judging by its type, or the principles upon which it is planned, the *éong* reminds one of the more simple or occasional huts the Lamet used to build, for instance, the guard houses on the fields, or the ordinary workshops. These also are usually built right on the ground. Like the *éong ying* they have two entrances, and between them runs a passage where there is room for hearths. On both sides of the entrances, floors are to be seen. The Upper Lamet have

similar watch houses, but simpler in plan (fig. 25 a). There is no middle passage, only one on the side between the entrances, and floor on one side of the passage, that is, only one floor. This plan is sometimes to be seen also among the Lower Lamet. In principle it is the same as that used in simple windcreens (*tup*). It is quite possible that the *éong ying* is in some

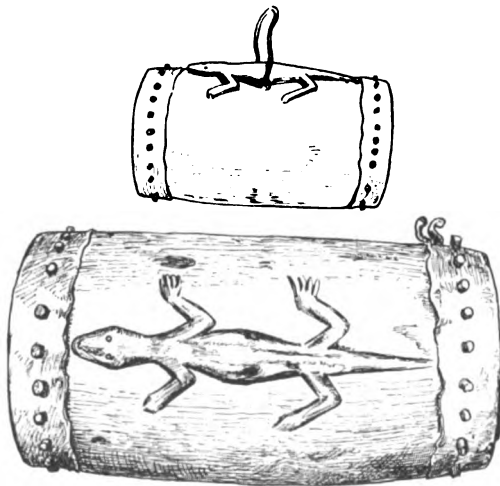


Fig. 24. Village drum.

way connected with these simple constructions, and that owing to its plan it is more ancient than pile buildings.

There is nothing, however, in the functions of *cong ying* that should prevent its being built on piles like the dwellings. And community houses on piles appear in South Indochina among the Moi tribes. Judging from this rough sketch, I must therefore assume that the *cong ying* is an ancient

type of building which retained its character due to its religious and social functions. It often happens that such buildings retain their ancient form. If this assumption is correct, then it should follow that the institution of the *cong ying* is old and older than the dwellings built on piles. This does not mean to say, however, that in olden times it had all the functions it has now, but at least some of them.

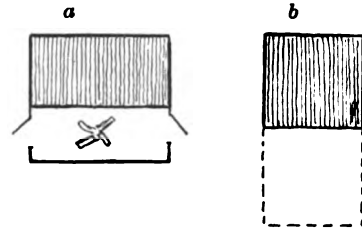


Fig. 25. Plans of watch houses. a = Upper Lamet, b = simple shed from Lower Lamet. The line of short dashes indicates the projecting roof.

The functions of the cong ying.

The *cong ying* is first of all a gathering place for the men of the village. Even early in the morning the men who need not go to work immediately have the habit of coming there and looking about and chatting. In the months of January and February it is quite cold up in the mountains, and the men gather round the log fire to warm themselves. Some prepare their food there if they have not already eaten their morning meal, and it can also be the case that some of these are gourmets who wish to have

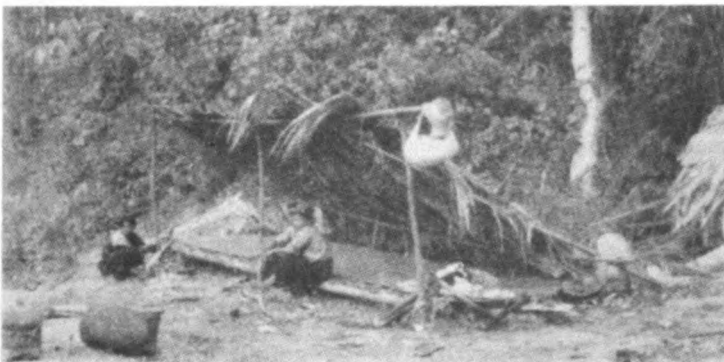


Fig. 26. Temporary windscreen (*tup*) out in the woods.

a particular dish. The Lamet are fond of food strongly spiced with red pepper, and this spice is not allowed in cooking in the dwellings. "The ancestor spirits do not like it," is the reason for this. During the rainy period when most of the inhabitants are out in the forest clearings and only a few old men remain in the villages, the latter usually cook their own food and always in the *éong*. In the dwellings no men do any cooking — that is left to the women, and the cooking hearth is taboo for men. The women usually prepare food in clay vessels, but on the other hand, men prepare food in a kind of bamboo tube. They do so also when they travel. The Lamet cannot make their own clay vessels, but buy them from the Thai tribes down in the valleys. In olden times they used only bamboo tubes.

During the course of the day the men like to sit in the community house, and if the weather is fine, they assemble outside. These are mostly older men who occupy themselves with the making of implements. They work on baskets, arrows and crossbows, musical instruments, details for traps, and all the implements needed in daily life. These may not be made in the dwellings. Within the *éong* the material for making these implements is also kept. Heaps of material for braiding baskets lie there and dry on the racks over the hearths, and half-made and finished objects in all stages of development are laid up on the beams in the roof, as well as many other things that are used on more special occasions in connection with religious ceremonies. Among these are large mats, lances, hunting implements, and many old objects used once upon a time but long laid by. In fact there exists a whole ethnographical museum, and is a delightful place for an ethnographer to poke about in. The objects do not belong to the community. Each and every one knows very well who is the proper owner. Due to the perpetually burning fires, the whole roof as well as all the implements have become black and sooty and very dusty as well.

On evenings after the day's work is done, the able-bodied men come there and sit and discuss the happenings of the day. Small boys who remain in the villages are also present and are allowed to keep up the fires. They are often ordered to run and fetch wood.

In some ways the *éong* is a kind of hunting center. As already mentioned, all the implements connected with hunting are kept there. A man who is going on a hunting expedition is not allowed to sleep with his wife for several days before and after the trip, and for this reason he goes to bed in the *éong*. If he has good luck on the hunting trip, he goes direct to the *éong* with his prey, where the animal is cut up. This is not allowed

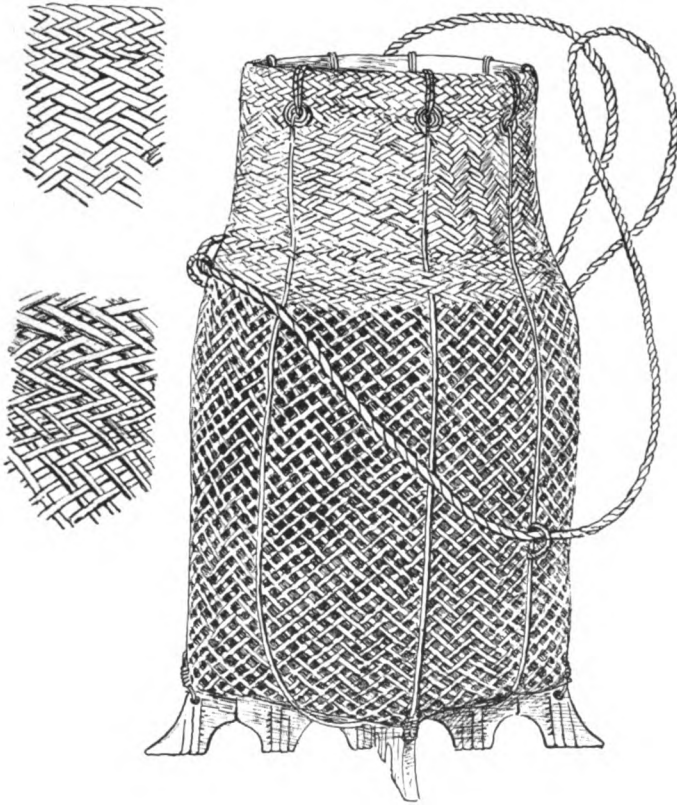


Fig. 27. Basket for dried meat and red pepper (height 24 cm.).

to take place in the dwellings, because the ancestral spirits would object. The meat is cut into strips and dried in the sun during the daytime, and at night it is laid in loosely braided baskets and placed on the drying racks over the hearths to be smoked. When this process of conserving is done, the meat is kept in the *éong ying* or in a private *éong*. Part of the slaughtered animal is eaten immediately, and is prepared in the *éong*. Other parts are distributed among the men of the village, each of whom gets his tit-bit. The skull of the prey from the hunt is cleaned thoroughly and decorated with a number of magical ornaments, and is then placed under the roof of the *éong* together with the bamboo spear that killed the animal, in case it died in a spear-trap. This head is a sacrifice to *mbrôg prân*, the spirit of the forest, or the game spirit, which is supposed to rule



Fig. 28. *Cóng ying* in Ban Xang. To the left of the house a skull of a gaur.

all the animals in the forests and which gives the Lamet good luck in hunting.

In every *cóng ying* among the Lamet, the roof is filled with skulls, and if the *cóng* is old, the oldest skulls are completely dark brown from smoke and age, and are nearly ready to fall to pieces. All the men know who owns the skulls, and most of them also know all the details of each particular hunt. If some one is lucky enough to get hold of so fine an animal as a gaur (*Bos gaurus*), especially big feasts are arranged. The whole village takes part in these, and while they last, no one is allowed to enter or leave the village, or do any work on the fields, for fear of the gaur's spirit. On one such occasion which I was allowed to attend, the whole *cóng* was filled with drying meat which smelled terrible.

On the whole, all slaughtering takes place in the *cóng*, not only of game but of domesticated animals. Only men take part in slaughtering. The meat of these animals is also prepared in the *cóng* and kept there. But the dried meat can very well be eaten in the dwellings. There is no risk that the meat kept in the *cóng* will be stolen, for theft is almost unknown among the Lamet.

Boys who have reached the age of puberty and are not married are not allowed to sleep at home with their parents. "That is a shameful thing to do," say the Lamet. Their place is the community house, or just as

often the private *cong*. Initiation ceremonies for boys or girls do not exist. Boys become used to being in the community house together with older men even in childhood. They have to sweep the floor and help to keep things clean there when the priest or an older man commands them to do so. They also become acquainted with everything connected with hunting in the *cong*. But small boys always sleep at home. Bachelors who sleep in the *cong* are seen there only at night, for during the day they are mostly at work and they eat their meals with their parents.

On the whole, one sees very few bachelors in a Lamet village. Among the Upper Lamet, most of them are away at work in Siam or other places. Those who have work nearby, for example in Houeissai, the seat of the French Administration, usually come home if they can when the agricultural season starts in full and especially during the harvest time when there is much to be done in Lamet villages, and particularly since that time of year is considered the most pleasant of all. Among the Lower Lamet there are not many bachelors either, in spite of the fact that they do not go off to Siam to the same extent as the Upper Lamet. This is due first of all to the fact that the villages are small and therefore there are not many boys between the age of fifteen and twenty years, that is, between puberty and the marriageable age. They commonly get married at about twenty years of age, at least those who remain at home in the villages. On the other hand, those who have wandered off to Siam often marry when they are much older. In one village — Mokala Panghay — I took a census of the population, and there were in fact only 4 bachelors of this age among the village's 141 inhabitants, and even then this village is among the larger ones. Whether this is normal among the Lamet, I am not able to say, for unfortunately I have no material for comparison. Since these villages are small, and the number of bachelors cannot therefore be great, it is obvious that there exists no organisation among them, especially since it is only those who have reached puberty who sleep in the *cong*.

Marriageable girls also sleep separately in a way, although they have their quarters in the dwellings. Here the young women have the right to receive their suitors. Among the Lamet there exists decided sexual liberty before marriage. The bunk of the girls naturally lies outside the taboo line, and can therefore be used by people not belonging to the house.

When evening comes, the bachelors generally pay court to the young women. They sit and talk in front of the dwelling, or creep up on the platform that is to be found in front of every house. When those inside

are asleep, the suitor — if he is accepted — may sleep with his chosen one on the unmarried girls' bed. Often this nightly wooing is preceded by serenades, in which the young men play the jew's harp in order to call their girls to them.

Moreover, during the rainy period the bachelors sleep in the same watch house as the family. There, evidently, no such taboos exist. These apparently exist only in connection with the dwellings where the ancestral altar stands.

Girls may not sleep in the *cong*. It is seldom one sees a woman in that house. They are not forbidden to go there, but it is a typically masculine place. The same refers to the private *cong*. Only during feasts may women enter the *cong* to carry water to the men, but they leave immediately afterwards. On the other hand, when strangers visit the village, the women are allowed to enter and drink rice wine with the guests. And it is not unusual that the young women massage the legs of the guests from afar "that they may walk easily in the mountain tracts." Massage is a kind of prosperity ceremony for guests and is usually accompanied by singing.

Strangers who come to the village and stay overnight are allowed to sleep in the *cong ying*, but in exceptional cases they may also sleep in the private *cong*. On coming to a Lamet village one always goes straight to the *cong ying*, where one is received by the priest or the chief. If they are not at home, one of the older men does the welcoming. A boy is immediately commanded to make a wax candle if there is not one already on hand, and then he who has received the guests presents them with a bowl filled with eggs and candles and flowers. This is a custom appearing in many parts of Laos, and which the Lamet have learned there. Then one is regaled with rice wine or brandy, and later perhaps with food also. If a guest comes from afar, and is seldom seen, it can happen that he is honored with a special feast. If this takes place during summer when most of the inhabitants are out on the clearings, they are notified of the arrival of a guest by means of signals on the big village drum. Then the notables of the village who are temporarily away from home, above all the village priest and the chief, and even the *lem*, come home in order to take part in the feast. They first drink rice wine with the guests and then the other men drink, the latter always remaining a proper distance away.

As we see up to this point, the *cong ying* serves as a kind of workshop for all kinds of masculine occupations, which the men may not perform

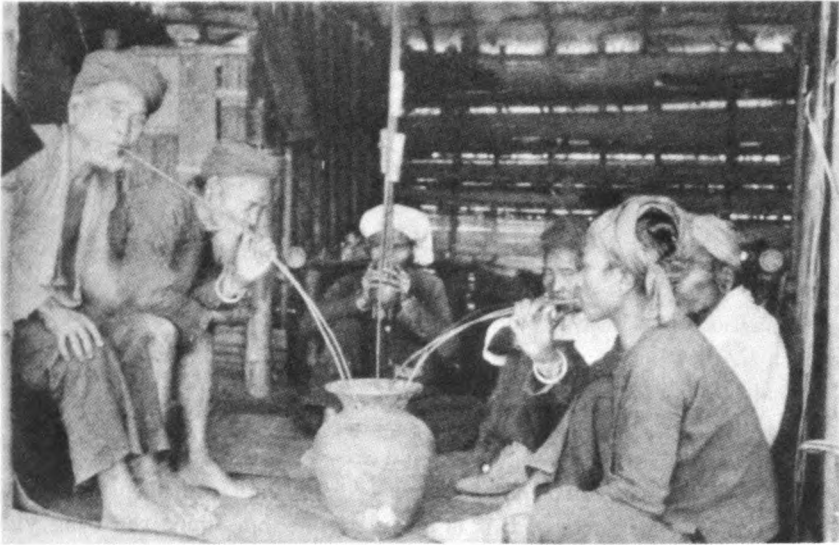


Fig. 29. Lem of Mokala Panghay drinking rice wine. From the left: Ai Nhi, Ai Cát (the *xəmiā*), a boy playing the *semiag*, Ai Crum (Tapia), Ai Sam and Ai Can (the village chief).

in the ordinary dwellings, due to the fact that the ancestral spirits do not permit certain kinds of work to be done there. In the *cong* we find different kinds of masculine activity taking place, such as the making of implements, everything connected with hunting and slaughtering, and it is at the same time a storage place for the results of these labors. Therefore it becomes a natural resting place for men. They remain there and sometimes take their meals there. From a very early age boys become accustomed to dropping in at this workshop, and they learn there all kinds of masculine occupations.

The *cong ying*, as we have noticed, has the function of a kind of bachelor's house, since the bachelors usually sleep there, which fact evidently has some connection with fear of incest, partly, and perhaps more with fear and respect for the important ancestral spirits. Its function of lodging strangers is possibly connected in the same way.

But all the needs described so far that are filled by the *cong ying* can also be covered by the private *cong*. They are used in the same way. Sometimes the bachelors of the family sleep in the family's own *cong* — if such exists — instead of remaining in the big *cong ying*. In some villages I have seen hunting trophies set up in the private *cong*, and even

slaughtering taking place there. Similarly to all I have described here, the situation varies in each village, and this can also be dependent upon the degree in which the family's *cong* is filled up with tools, etc. It can be so small and crowded that there is no room left over in which to sleep. Some older bachelors — and these are sometimes to be met with — and cripples or widowers who have no family of their own, prefer to sleep in their own *cong*.

This was the case with my servant Ai Kam. He had been in Siam a long time and had saved up a fortune which soon melted away. He had been married, but his wife and only child had died. He could not move in with his brother's family, and lived therefore in his own *cong*, but had his meals mostly with his sisters. His uncle was a cripple and a bachelor, and also lived in his own private *cong*.

In several villages where I stopped, I was invited to live in the chief's private *cong* instead of sleeping in the big *cong ying*. In new villages, or villages under construction, this is often the custom, since the *cong ying* is the last building to be erected. Only then is the village considered ready, and the inaugural feast for the village can then take place, but the private *cong* are built even before the dwellings, for they often have the character of a temporary, easily built house, as their type shows. The big village drum, on the contrary, is moved into the village long before the dwellings are put up.

The *cong ying* has other purposes to fill which cannot be taken over by other buildings in the village. These are a number of purely public activities, particularly the ceremonies connected with the village spirits.

I have already described the place for the sacrifice poles inside and outside the *cong*. Sacrifices are made to these twice a year, once before the sowing begins, just at the time when the first monsoon rains come down on the mountains of the Lamet, and secondly the ceremony is repeated when the rice has reached a certain height.

Besides being used at these festivities for the village spirits, the big village drum (fig. 24) comes into use again when sacrifice is made to the spirit of the forest, and even as a means of signalling, as already mentioned. It is a double-headed drum, made of a hollowed-out tree-trunk. Its length varies between about 1-2 m. On its side is a sculpture in high relief representing an iguana lizard. This serves also as a suspension cord, and here are fastened the magical ornaments and the sacrifice. What kind of a symbol the iguana lizard may be, I have not succeeded in finding out,



Fig. 30. Sacrifice pole for *mbrōg yig* outside the community house in Ban Tup. Observe the stone at the base of the pole.

despite repeated questioning. There exists a legend about the iguana, but since it has no connection with the drum, it is useless to review it here.

The drum is not the general property of the village, but belongs to the one who made it, or more correctly, to the one who directed the making of it. Once when I bought a similar drum which was not in use, the priest of the village had nothing to do with the transaction, and the money was paid to the widow of the man who made it. The old woman had difficulty in parting from it, wept and was sad, for it had been made by her dead husband.

The smithy marks the end of the village *cong*, and is used only for repairing big knives resembling the machete. Only a few men know how to do this, and no Lamet can make iron tools. Knives and other articles of iron are only re-forged, and this takes place during the days when the cutting down of forest for new clearings begins. Sacrifices are then made to the spirit of the smithy. All iron tools, as well as clay vessels and cloth, are bought from the Thai tribes, and the Lamet have learned the art of repairing iron tools from the Thai.

As already mentioned, the *cong* serves as a gathering place for men, and a lodging place for strangers, above all, it is the center of the village, where feasts and meetings of all kinds are held.

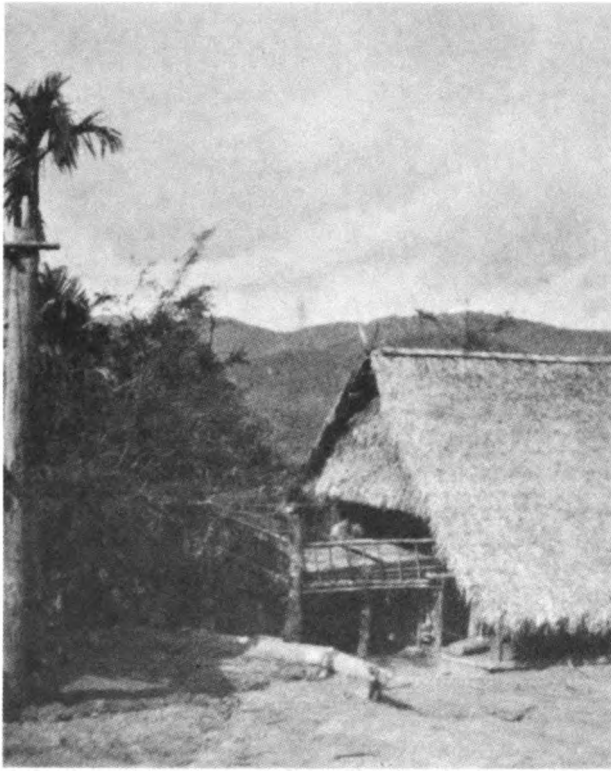


Fig. 31. Dwelling from Lower Lamet.

In the functions named here, we see the importance of the community house for the common life of the village. That it becomes a particularly masculine center is of course obvious, since all the activity that goes on in the *cong* is masculine.

An organization of bachelors does not exist, since they are too few in number. Nor have I come across anything that points to an initiation ceremony. The bachelors must adjust themselves to the extended family's or house group's co-operative unit. A special masculine association does not exist in the Lamet villages, neither in regard to clubs nor organized classes in age. Moreover, the community house plays no great part during the rainy season, when the village is nearly empty and the people are out working on the clearings. During this period, therefore, the same rules that apply in the village do not longer apply to their daily life. The men

then sleep in the guard houses with their families, while masculine activity is allowed to proceed in the same house.

As we have also noted, life in the *cong* is allied with all the taboo conceptions bound up with the dwelling, that is to say, with the ancestral spirits. On the other side the *cong ying* is a manifestation of the public life of the village group just as the spirits of the village and the *xamiā* which belongs to this institution. Its use as a men's house might be a secondary thing taken over from the private *congs*. On the same time it is an expression for the division of functions between the two sexes.

The Moving of Villages

In cataloguing villages, we often notice that two or more of them can have the same name, with *neua* or *tai* placed afterwards, or *luong* or *noi*, etc. This means that a village has been divided into two or even more parts. *Neua* means north and *tai* south; *luong* = big, *noi* = little. These characterization words are not in Lamet, but in the Yuan language. Sometimes it can happen that two such villages of common origin lie very far from one another, sometimes nearby, as for example Sithoun Tai and Neua, which lie at a distance of only 500 meters from each other.

I was quite curious about this dividing up and wondered if it was possibly due to some sort of dual organization. However, this was not the case, for the same families and clans were represented in both villages. The reason for a village dividing was often a conflict of some sort, which resulted in one family deciding to leave, and a few others joining them.

In Sithoun the reason for dividing the village was merely a quarrel within a family. Since both villages lay quite near each other, they continued to have their territory in common. In Lakhon the conflict was due to a love affair; a married man had an affair with a young girl who became pregnant. Because of this a quarrel arose in the village. The girl took poison and committed suicide, and on account of this the man felt that he could not remain in the village. He settled down a bit outside of the village grounds, and a few other families kept him company. The village of Sathon was divided in 1936. I was told that in this case the reason was that one family had an illness and had to move away, other families following along. However, all this has no connection with kinship. What lay back of the last-named case I have not found out, but I suspect that the family in question was forced to move away because the others in the village were afraid of the spirit which was responsible

for the illness in the family. The Lamet are particularly anxious about such "spirit contamination," and as we shall see further on, half of the village is isolated when a death occurs, just for this reason. Mokahang Tai and Neua lie the distance of half a day by foot from each other. This village was divided very long ago when the Lamet were at war with the Burmese.

These are some examples of what the Lamet themselves relate as reasons for the division of villages, but I consider them incomplete. It was my intention to take up this matter towards the close of my stay among the Lamet, and map out the villages. Unfortunately I could not carry out this intention.

In French literature about the primitive tribes in the mountain regions, the simple swidden farmers — "les Indonésiens" — as they are called due to their resemblance to the natives of Indonesia, are considered to be nomads of some sort, who live only a short while in one village. This is possibly the case with the Meo and Yao, who, because of their system of shifting cultivation, exhaust the earth so completely that no forest can grow there again and the steppes gain the upper hand. On the other hand, the Lamet and similar tribes cannot be called nomads. They are as a matter of fact permanent, and several of their villages are very old. It happens indeed now and again that a village is moved, or that a part of it breaks loose and founds a new village, but this happens at such long intervals of time, that one can certainly not classify the Lamet as nomads. And with only a few exceptions it is no great distance that the villages are moved. Pouvé Luong deserted the old village site, and moved only 200 meters away. The inhabitants of Pouvé say that the reason for this was that the village burned down. This was true, as a matter of fact, but only partially so. Only a couple of houses had burned. Other inhabitants of the village declared that many people had been ill in the old village, and that it was a haunt for evil spirits. This is very possibly nearer the truth, and it is possible that the fire, which according to the Lamet was also brought about by the evil spirits, was the "kindling spark" which finally induced them to move. Out of pure curiosity, I visited the old village, and the result was that I became completely covered with lice. The place was horribly dirty, and it is possible that the lice did their part in driving the people away from the old site.

In Ban Xang also a new village had sprung up a couple of hundred meters away from the old one, and that the latter had really burned down, I was able to verify. The buildings of the villages are as a rule of very in-

flammable material, and it requires but little to convert a whole village to ashes. The hearths where the fires burn within the houses are quite open, and only a little spark can be the cause of the whole house catching fire.

But on the other hand, a village can gradually become too dirty even for the Lamet. This was the case for example in Sot Noi. According to the village chief – an old man of about 80 – the village had always stood there. It was one of the dirtiest and most ramshackle I saw in the whole Lamet district. The inhabitants wanted to move and build an entirely new village, for they thought it not worth while to put the old one in order. Meanwhile the chief was against the idea, and declared that it was all very well to want to move, but for years he had sought a suitable place in the vicinity where it could stand, without being able to find such a place. The surroundings were altogether too difficult for settling, and where there were flat places on the ridges the water supply was insufficient. They should wait yet a while, and besides, many of the strong young men were away in Siam serving as coolies in the teak forests, so there was not much man power at home.

Sithoun Tai was also an extremely dirty village, and during the summer there was a decided mortality of children. It is probable that the children had tuberculosis, or something of the kind, for they coughed to an unusual degree. The dirt in the huts did not help the situation either, as far as hygiene was concerned. The inhabitants, however, blamed the spirits, and sacrificed one domestic animal after the other, but nothing seemed to help. In spite of this, I never heard a suggestion that they should leave the village. Naturally that is an immense undertaking when one takes into consideration all the material to be chopped out of hard tropical varieties of wood, which form the framework of their houses. It is therefore easy to understand why they hesitate in face of such labor.

When I gave an account of Mokala Panghay's history, I mentioned that the second word in the name of the village means watch house on the swidden. According to what the inhabitants of the village told me, the village was originally laid out on a swidden. The same was the case with Pouvé Luong and Ban Xang. It is quite understandable that when a new village is to be founded a new space for it would not be cleared if a swidden already in existence could be made use of. Building activity among the Lamet is always concentrated to the time of year immediately following the bearing in of the harvest. This is of course the most suitable time, too, for founding a new village, when there is plenty of food, and a pause occurs

in their work before they are obliged to begin making new swiddens. During this time also there is usually fine weather. If we then suppose that a group of families who own a swidden in common have found it suitable as a new village site, and have already decided to move, they simply remain on the swidden, and try to persuade a few more families to join them. In this way a new village can grow up. At least it is one of the several possible ways.

From the foregoing it is clear that the Lamet have not moved their villages so often that they can be regarded as nomads. We can say that as a rule they remain in the village one generation or more. In any case, they can hardly be said to have a "nomad complex," on the contrary, most of them have very little inclination for leaving their villages.

When a village is moved, the old material is used as much as possible in order to avoid hewing out new logs. At first temporary dwellings are built on the new village site, either a windscreen (*tup*) or small huts resembling the houses used on the swiddens, or what is most common, simply private *cong*. The Lamet live in these huts until they have their proper dwellings ready. These temporary houses can be in use several years as we have just seen in an example in Mokala Panghay. The very last house to be moved from the old village is the *cong ying*. Not until this has been erected on the new site, and the spirits of the village sacrificed to, is the new village really complete.

CHAPTER 5.

Social Organization

Clans

The Lamet are organized into seven totemic clans, which are patrilineal and exogamous. Each clan has a totem, and in six cases of the seven, this is an animal, in the seventh case a plant. Each clan has an origin myth which tells of the clan's ancestor and his relation to his totem. A clan is called *tā* which means ancestor. Among the Lamet I have come across the following clans:

tā pōś = roe clan.

tā cæit = thrush (a species of *Enicurus*) clan. There are *two* kinds of this particular clan, each of them exogamous.

tā mpōl = *Arctogalidea leucotis* clan.

tā kiāk = deer clan.

tā klay = eagle clan.

tā taro = *taro* clan. *taro* is a tree whose name I do not know.

I have met members of all these clans with the exception of the deer clan. The Lamet have only related that such a clan exists. I have not investigated which clans are to be found in each village, since I did not find out about the clan organization in the beginning of my stay. One peculiar thing is that there are two different kinds of *cæit* clan. This is surely due to the fact that one of these is a Khmu clan. In Mokala Panghay namely, it proved to be the case that all those belonging to one *cæit* clan were of Khmu origin. It is possible that this is also the case with some of the other clans. The Lamet declare that the Khmu have the same clans as theirs, although they have one more, *tā kśay* = elephant clan. As I have already pointed out, the Lamet are a comparatively little tribe, surrounded by a Khmu population with whom they have mingled. It is hard to decide exactly what the Lamet have taken from the Khmu, since nobody has investigated the latter. Among the Upper Lamet the Khmu

influence seems to be greater than among the Lower, which is due to the fact that the territory of the former borders right on the Khmu territory. Besides, I have the impression that they have decidedly more Khmu blood than is the case with Lower Lamet.

There are different origin myths for the two different *čait* clans. Before finding this out, I thought that the two exogamous groups with the same clan name were some sort of sub-clans, but this proved to be wrong. Such a kind of grouping does not exist, and I have not been able to discover any phratries.

The *čait* clan which is possibly of Khmu origin, I call *čait*-B in contrast to the Lamet clan *čait*-A. In the myth which tells of *čait*-B, the deer and *tavɔ* clans are also mentioned. In Mokala Panghay the only housefather of the *tavɔ* kin is a descendant of the Khmu. Since the three clans *čait*-B, *kiāk*, and *tavɔ* form an allied whole in one and the same myth, it is not incredible that all these are really Khmu clans.

Each member of a clan is forbidden to make use of his totem, that is to say that if a man belongs to the roe clan, he is not allowed to eat roe. I had not expected to find totemic clans among the Lamet, and had several times inquired about the subject, always receiving an answer in the negative. On my first hunting trip for roe, I took the opportunity of asking again, and on that occasion had the good luck of finding several men in the village who refused to accept its meat. They declared that they could not eat it since their ancestor was once a roe. In the village of Sithoun a man related to me that he had heard that once when someone killed a roe, he found bracelets on it. This was evidence enough that the animal had once been a human being.

Special clan meetings or ceremonies for the ancestral totem father do not exist. Certain differences occur, however, in the ancestor rites among the different clans, which I shall describe further on. In a way the clans have a connection with the cult of ancestors, and if a man lives in his wife's home, he is not allowed to eat the meat of her totem.

All those belonging to the same clan consider themselves related, and may not intermarry. Even if they live in widely separated villages and far away from each other, and have never even seen each other, the rule holds if they belong to the same clan. A clan brother is then given the name of *yū-ēk*, which means younger-older brother. In every village there are always several clans represented, and it is compulsory to have at least two. This holds even for the swidden groups, that is to say, when several families co-operate on one swidden. The Lamet declare that it is not right

for a swidden group to consist of only one clan. This is also quite natural, since, as we have observed, it often happens that a swidden group can form the nucleus for a new village.

The most important task of the clans is to act as a regulator for marriage ties, to point out which laws must be followed, and we shall see in the following how the clan organization exerts its influence, when we investigate their terminology of kinship.

Meanwhile, before I go into this, I shall give an account of those origin myths of the various clans which I was able to get information about.

The mpōl clan myth.

Totem animal: *mpōl* = *Arctogalidea leucotis*.

"Once upon a time a man saw a *mpōl* go into a hole in a tree. The man wanted to kill the animal. He went and fetched his axe to chop down the tree, in order to get the animal to come out. When he had chopped for a while, bits of bark from the tree flew into his eyes and made him blind. A short while afterwards he died."

This tree had red wood something like the *maidu* (similar to mahogany), and it is absolutely forbidden for the Lamet belonging to the *mpōl* clan to use this tree for any purpose. They are not allowed to eat the meat of the animal *mpōl* either, since it was due to him that their ancestor died.

The pōś clan myth.

Totem animal: *pōś* = roe.

"Once long ago people suffered from hunger for a whole year. One day an old man wandered in the woods with his grandson, seeking wild edible plants, such as wild yams, or hoping to come across some sort of fruit. As they went their way they found some fruit which had fallen on the path they followed. They gathered these and began to eat them. The boy ate without any trouble, but when the old man ate, the seeds of the fruit did not go down to his stomach but fastened in his throat. He tried in every possible way to get them either down or up again, but all in vain. The old man did not know what to do. He ran and hopped in the forest, and when his grandson saw him do this he began to cry and to call after his grandfather as he went deeper into the forest. But the old man was unable to talk and did not answer the boy. All he could say was 'op, op, op,' and he disappeared into the forest. Afterwards, the members of the family believe, the old man was turned into a roe, and for this reason they stopped eating the meat of this animal."

The éæt-A clan myth.

Totem animal: *éæt* = a species of *Enicurus*.

"There was once a man who owned a buffalo which he was very fond of. He often played with and petted this buffalo in his leisure hours. The man was also fond of young girls. Every night he went and visited a girl that he had taken a great liking to, but when he had slept with her a while, his thoughts went back to his buffalo, and he returned home. Before going to bed he went to the buffalo and clapped it and stroked its horns. Every evening the same thing happened. First he went and courted the girl, and then he returned home and petted his buffalo and stroked its horns before going to bed. After a while the girl became aware that she was pregnant. According to the custom of the Lamet, the man was then obliged to pay 30 piasters to the girl's parents. But since he had no money, he was forced to give them the buffalo he loved so much.

"The man now became very dejected when he had lost his beloved buffalo, and he thought about it constantly.

"One day he sat on the bank of a river and he thought: 'Why have I lost my buffalo? Oh, it is my penis that is responsible for my losing my fine animal.' And he became quite angry with his penis. He took hold of it with his left hand, and with his right he took up his chopping knife and wondered if he should cut it off. Just at the moment the bird *éæt* came flying past him very swiftly, calling: '*éæt! éæt! éæt!*' The man was so taken by surprise that he dropped the knife he was holding, and as it fell it cut off his penis. He died shortly afterwards, and it was the fault of this bird."

Since then, all those belonging to this family have been forbidden to eat of this bird. *éæt* is a kind of thrush somewhat larger than a wagtail, and it lives near streams and rivers.

The myth of the kiāk, larə and éæt-B clans.

Totem animals and object: *kiāk* = deer, *larə* = a tree, and *éæt* = a species of *Enicurus*.

"There was once upon a time a man who pursued a deer which had escaped from the trap he had laid out. The deer had run off somewhere, and the hunter wanted to find the hiding place of the wounded animal. Unfortunately he could find no traces of the animal. He took up a new trail and thus came across another deer which lay sleeping, but appeared to be dead, for it had eaten a certain kind of waterweed.

"The man said to himself: 'This is the animal which was wounded in my trap, and he now lies dead here.' He then fastened a bamboo tube and a little box containing gold to the horns of the deer, for the spirit of wild game. The hunter then returned to the village in order to eat, and also to fetch village folk who could help him carry home the deer.

"But while he was away the sleeping deer had awakened and gone its way. When the hunter and his friends came there they found no deer. Thus they were obliged to continue the chase. While on their way they met the bird *caït* which was caught in a trap, and they took the bird. They must still continue the chase after the deer, however.

"There was once a man who went with the aid of a walking stick when he set out to examine his traps, and sometimes this stick was a lance of gold. When he came to the bank of a river he thought: 'How shall I get over the river?' He saw then that some ants had climbed up a tree called *tav*, and he asked the ants: 'Can I climb up this tree?' The ants answered: 'We who are thousands in number can climb it, so you who are alone can certainly climb it too.' The man then went up in the tree, steadying himself with his lance of gold. When he had reached halfway up the tree it broke in two, and he fell into the water, and his gold lance vanished in the whirling current of the river. He then returned to his village and told his sister and his brother's son to go and dam up that part of the river so that it could be drained, and in this way the lance could be recovered.

"While this was happening, the hunter and his comrades were in the act of chasing the deer. They became hungry, and just when they stopped the chase they met the sister and the boy who were on their way to make a *yās*,¹⁾ and they begged for a little rice to eat. However, the woman and child refused to give them anything to eat. The men became angry and killed the woman and the child, and then they ate up the contents of the woman's knapsack. When they sat down to eat, they plucked the feathers from the *caït* bird they had stolen, and these they placed in the mouth and anus of the dead woman and child, and then returned to the village."

The descendants of the man who lost his lance are not allowed to make use of the *tav* tree, and they all belong to this clan. Those who are descended from the woman and child belong to the *caït*-B clan. Those descended from the hunter belong to the deer clan.²⁾

¹⁾ A kind of drain used in fishing (see p. 175).

²⁾ This myth is probably only fragmentary.

Kinship

Linguistically we must include in the kinship terminology of the Lamet:

1) Simple words of classification.

2) Compound terms of more descriptive character; some of these are terms of address or of politeness, which in certain cases indicate a particular kinship, and which otherwise, when this is not the case, are used for indicating respect. Here also, we must include a difference in terminology if the man or woman spoken to have children or not. Where there are children, this is indicated with (c).

m. s. = man speaking.

w. s. = woman speaking.

Single words.

un' father, father's brother.

nē mother, mother's sister, father's brother's wife.

tā father's father, mother's father, wife's father, daughter-in-law's father, wife's brother (c), mother's brother, husband's father or grandfather, father's sister's husband.

This word is also used as some sort of term of politeness or address to elderly persons that are not related to the speaker.

yā father's mother, wife's mother, daughter-in-law's mother (m. s.), husband's mother, mother's brother's wife, wife's father's mother, wife's brother's wife.

Is also used as a term of politeness, see above.

kən child, brother's child, husband's brother's child.

There is no non-compound word son and daughter. *kən* is used in connection with animals also, for example, *kən šə* = puppy.

al older sister (w. s.), older clan sister, mother's sister's daughters older than the speaker, wife's brother's daughters.

yū younger brother (m. s.), sister living in the same house (w. s.), unmarried man or woman, childless, and of the same clan and younger than the speaker, mother's sister's sons and daughters who are younger than the speaker.

ēk older brother or man of the same clan older than the speaker, childless; mother's sister's sons, older than the speaker.

præi older brother living in the same house (w. s.)

This word is considered to be obsolete.

kenān sister living in the same house (m. s.), ancient form, like the above.

<i>hæm</i>	mother's brother's daughter (m. s.), father's sister's son (w. s.). These two cross-cousins could marry each other. The relation <i>hæm</i> also indicates each person who is childless, and who has possible marriage relations, e. g., sister's husband (w. s.), in case she is childless.
<i>ko</i>	father's sister's daughter, mother's brother's son. These cross-cousins cannot marry each other. The word means that they have the tie of relation <i>kō</i> to each other.
<i>nig</i>	father's sister's daughter (w. s.), mother's brother's daughter (w. s.) <i>yū</i> = father's sister's son (m. s.), mother's brother's son (m. s.)
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<i>kōit</i>	daughter's husband (w. s. childless), husband's sister's son, sister's son (m. s.), wife's elder brother's son.
<i>vai</i>	son's wife (w. s., m. s., childless), wife's brother's daughter, younger sister's daughter (m. s.), brother's daughter (w. s.)
<i>tū</i>	husband's sister's daughter, sister's daughter (m. s.)
<i>kmōn</i>	wife's brother's son, sister's son (m. s., w. s.), brother's son.
<i>pesau</i>	daughter's husband (m. s.)
<i>pēi (pē)</i>	sister's husband (m. s.), husband's sister's husband, father's sister's husband (m. s.), wife's elder brother.
<i>mā</i>	father's sister, wife's elder brother's wife.
<i>n'um</i>	husband's brother (childless), wife's younger sister's husband (childless), father's younger brother (m. s.)
<i>num</i>	wife's younger sister (m. s., c.), younger sister (w. s., c.), father's 2nd rank wife's younger sister.
<i>om (ōp)</i>	son's wife's mother (w. s.), daughter's husband's mother (w. s.), <i>ōp</i> = Khmu word.
<i>kmā</i>	husband.
<i>kapun</i>	wife.
<i>pūp</i>	son's wife (m. s., w. s.), appears only among the Upper Lamet. Possibly Khmu word.

Compound words.

In most cases the word *kun* is added, which really means elder person, but can also be used in respect to people and animals with offspring. *Šo-kun* means thus a dog that has pups.

Un'-kun and *nē-kun* are titles of politeness for persons who have children. Before they have any children, even if they are married, they are given

the title *həm*. As already stated, *tā* and *yā* are used as terms of politeness for elderly persons, and *ēk* for men. The Lamet seldom use the 2nd person singular *mī* = thou to others than children.

In connection with this I should like to remark that the word for man is *huun'* and that for woman *ænē*. Evidently these words have some connection with the terms for father and mother.

Further, the suffixes *-tau* and *-num* appear in compound words. These mean old and young respectively, and are adjectives with the same meaning taken from the Thai language.

<i>un'-tau</i>	father's father's father.
<i>nē-tau</i>	father's mother.
<i>tā-tau</i>	father's father's father.
<i>yā-tau</i>	father's father's mother.
<i>un'-kuun</i>	sister's husband (w. s.), mother's sister's husband, husband's brother, father's brother. Is used when all these have children. The same with the next word.
<i>nē-kuun</i>	husband's elder brother's wife, mother's elder sister, elder brother's wife (m. s.), father's brother's wife. Mostly used as a term of politeness, <i>e. g.</i> , when a wife of 2nd rank speaks to the one of first rank.
<i>nē-peit'</i>	husband's younger brother's wife (c.), <i>peit'</i> means little.
<i>nē-to</i>	wife of 2nd rank. Used by the wife of first rank when she speaks to the latter, and when the one spoken to has no children. If she has children she is called: see next word.
<i>nē-um</i>	the former with children.
<i>kapuun-um</i>	wife of 2nd rank with c. Her husband is speaking to her.
<i>kapuun-to</i>	wife of 2nd rank without c. Her husband is speaking to her.
<i>un'-n'ūm</i>	father's younger brother.
<i>un'-gāk</i>	daughter's husband (w. s., c.), if he lives in the house.
<i>nē-gāk</i>	son's wife (w. s., m. s., c.), when she lives in the home of her parents-in-law. <i>gāk</i> probably means something which corresponds to "in-law."
<i>kən-mā</i>	son.
<i>kən-puun</i>	daughter.
<i>kən-sūi</i>	grandchild (son's), sister's child.
<i>kən-kau</i>	eldest child.

<i>kən-nti</i>	children between the eldest and youngest.
<i>kən-sut</i>	youngest child.
	The three adjectives or suffixes <i>kau</i> , <i>nti</i> , <i>sut</i> are used also together with <i>al</i> and <i>ək</i> in order to indicate the relation of age.
<i>kən-ək</i>	elder sister's child.
<i>kən-yü</i>	younger sister's or brother's child.

Cross-cousins.

As I have already mentioned, the word *həm* means a certain cross-cousin relationship, or a person generally open to marriage relations, and at the same time it indicates those that are married but have no children as yet. The words of classification, as we see, are generally non-compound, and in most cases refer to persons who are childless. As soon as a child comes into the world, compound words are used as a sort of title of honor. This probably means that a person is not considered to be completely married until he or she has children. It can perhaps be said that the non-compound terms indicate ties of kinship regarding those who are and those who are not open for marriage.

When two clans are united by marriage, one says *tā rūm* = clans united, or *tā pesau* = clans in the relation of father-in-law and son-in-law.

An interesting fact is that those who are indicated with the relation *kō* cannot marry. It is difficult to say what might be the reason for this. It is of course quite usual among a large number of different peoples that only a certain kind of cross-cousins can or should have marriage possibilities. Many theories have been presented as an explanation of this peculiar fact. I shall not enter upon this here, but only point out some conditions which could possibly serve as a clue in future field research in Indochina.

In case of divorce, girls accompany their mother and boys their father. Thus it is possible that girls are considered as belonging more to the mother's clan for one reason or another. Perhaps this has some connection with the fact that after divorce the mother and daughters reside with the mother's father or brother. Is it possible that the custom of sacrificing to the ancestor spirits of a woman in order to get children can also have some connection with the matter?

There is still another possibility, which unfortunately I did not investigate among the Lamet. The latter, like the Lao and several other

peoples of Indochina, have somewhat homogeneous conceptions of the soul. The Lao include a large number of souls that sit in different parts of the body. A distinction is made here in regard to masculine and feminine. If the feminine are in the preponderance in the embryo, the child will be a girl, and vice versa. I know of nothing like this existing among the Lamet. It is possible that one soul, the head-soul, for example, is masculine, and the knee-soul feminine. Then if a child has a more feminine soul, that is from the mother, it will be a girl, and vice versa. Thus perhaps, this would mean that the greater part of her being is considered as belonging to the mother's clan.

This is naturally pure speculation, but as every field investigator knows, one must investigate all possible combinations. I might remark in this connection that among the Puli-Akha I found similar conceptions of the soul, but that a woman has only nine of a man's ten souls. The tenth is the head-soul! This soul represents the sexual power of a man, his center of strength, and it is concentrated in a little pigtail of hair that grows in the vertex. The plait is carefully protected by a wide headband that is sewn on. If someone were to cut off the plait from the man's head, he would wither away and die. This undoubtedly reminds one strongly of the old story in the Book of Judgment, about Samson and Delilah. And it leads our thoughts farther to head-hunting in Further India, and the use of skulls as sacrifice.

If the wife of a Puli-Akha should have twins, or a child that resembles the father too strongly, his strength would vanish, and he would wither away and die. For this reason, one of the twins must be killed. Thus, here we have indication of a conception of the transference of the soul to a child. Unfortunately I have never been successful in getting information of this kind from the Lamet. It is possible that it exists. If so, perhaps conceptions of this kind could explain cross-cousin marriage among the Lamet. This little excursion from the subject shows how important it is to investigate all combinations, and how, by means of comparative study, one can get ideas for new questioning. It also leads us into a tangle of problems in regard to various conceptions about the soul. However interesting the transference of souls, head-hunting, sacrifice rites, etc., are, I cannot take up time with them in this book.

The two terms *vōi* and *kōit* refer also to the *hæm* relation.

If a woman can marry her cross-cousin of *hæm* relation, this results in her becoming the daughter of a brother of a man's wife, which also means daughter-in-law when both man and woman are speaking, and at the

same time the daughter of a brother, when a woman speaks. This is the *vɔi* relation.

It also results in making a husband's nephew through a sister *hæm* to his own daughter, that is to say, he can be the daughter's husband, and when a man speaks, his sister's son. This is the *kʃit* relation.

The terms *kmôn* and *tû* are analogous to the *kô* relation. A wife's brother's son cannot marry her daughter, since he is *kô* with her. The case is the same with a brother's son, when a woman speaks, and a sister's son, when a woman speaks. In this last case they are *yv*. In the two former cases *kô*.

In the same way, a husband's sister's daughter, and a man's sister's daughter refer to the *kô* relation. In both cases the term *tû* is used.

We see here how the cross-cousin terms *hæm* and *kô* are related on one side to the terms *vɔi* and *kʃit*, and on the other to the terms *kmôn* and *tû*. They form a system of relations in those cases where the men and women to whom the terms are applied have no children as yet.

Intermarriage of clans.

When two clans are joined by the kinship of brothers-in-law, this is called *tā rūm* = clans joined. When one clan is related to another through sons-in-law, i. e. when a boy in one clan marries a girl in another he calls his father-in-law *tā* and the latter his son-in-law *pesau*. In this case one speaks of *tā pesau*.

I have not been able to find out any further meaning for these terms. It is possible that they refer to other clan relationships, which I should name below.

An interesting term is *n'um*. This indicates that a husband's brother can also mean father's younger brother, and wife's younger sister's husband. That is, all these terms can be used in cases where two brothers marry two sisters of another family.

The sororate can be looked upon as a sort of exchange of the same kind. I have questioned the Lamet about the sororate. But they have denied the fact that a man ought to marry his wife's sister. Yet it is considered to be a good thing. On the other hand, I have often come across men who are married to two sisters. Certain terms, too, point to the sororate, such as: *nē* which means mother and mother's sisters. It can also mean father's younger brother's wife, but this seems to indicate the levirate.

The term *num* indicates this also. It means younger sister, when a woman speaks, and besides, wife's younger sister, when a man speaks,



Fig. 32. Young Lamet mother with child. At the house post two water containers of bamboo.

and further father's second rank wife's younger sister. These terms are used only when the woman in question has children. And this means that a man can possibly be married to his wife's younger sister.

All the terms spoken of in this section indicate a sort of exchange of

wives between two families. If once the one family is joined to the other, it seems as if the exchange should continue. It is possible that the above combined terms *tā rūm* and *tā pesau* indicate such an exchange. When one goes through the marriage connections in Mokala Panghay it can be seen that the men of one family are frequently married to women of one clan. This seems to point in the same direction.

Differences in status between those with children and the childless.

One thing that stands out clearly in the reviewing of kinship terms is the great difference between those who have children and those who have not.

Even if a man or a woman is married, he or she has no right of decision in the community, but is regarded as a young unmarried person dependent upon his parents. But as soon as a married couple gets a child, their status changes.

They are now considered to be completely married, heads of a family so to speak, and the married man with children obtains quite a new pondus. He can take part in the conferences of men and present his opinions, which a man without children is not allowed to do. As soon as a biological family, i. e., man, wife and child, has been established, it has the possibility of breaking away from the extended family and forming an independent unit, which often happens. Therefore two classes can as a matter of fact be detected, which can nearly be called age classes.

A fullgrown person is referred to as *i* or *hīi*. A boy in the marriageable age is called *kən plēu* and the girl *kən priā*. They are not addressed as boy or girl but with a term: *huun'* = man and *ænē* = woman meaning man and woman who have children.

This difference between those who have children and those who have not appears in the kinship terms. If we take a case like sons-in-law and daughters-in-law, these are characterized by *kōit* and *vōi* as long as they have no children, but when they have got children they are called *un'-gāk* and *nē-gāk*.

A great many of the single terms are used for persons who are childless. Or rather to indicate whether marriage connections are possible or not. Then it is no longer a question of choice in marriage.

For persons with children one uses words compounded with *un'* and *nē* for the younger ones, and *yā* and *tā* for the older plus a suffix, as for example, *gāk*, *kun*, *um*. But these words can also be used as phrases of politeness.

As an exception we have the simple word *num*, which is surely an elision of *nē-um* which is made even more plain by its being used only for people with children.

The rest of the compound words describe, for example, a wife by means of an attribute as *nē-peil'* which means husband's younger brother's wife, if she has children. The word really means "little mother." When she is childless she is called *hæm*.

In the same way the wife's sister is characterized with *num* when she has children, and with *hæm* when she has not.

Teknonymy.

If a man has children, he can then be called "father of that or that son." The oldest son is then mentioned, and in case of there being no son, the daughter's name is mentioned. This custom appears widely in different parts of the world, one place being in Assam among the Khassi tribes, who have also many other elements of culture in common with the Lamet. It appears also in China, among the Malay peoples and on the Andaman Islands.¹⁾ This manner of characterizing people is a sort of term of politeness. One could just as well say *un'* or *nē-kun*, especially if the person referred to is elderly.

This denotes also that as soon as a person has children and his status has been changed, then the kinship terms, which indicate which persons are and which are not possible for marriage, cease to function. They are no longer necessary.

An analogy to this is to be found in Melanesia, where a person's status is changed with parenthood, when one uses teknonymy and need not bother any longer about involved terms of relationship. Lowie²⁾ and Parsons³⁾ regard this as a partial explanation of teknonymy.

Marriage

When a Lamet boy wants to marry, he is not allowed to choose his wife from his own clan. Nor is it permissible to marry his parallel cousins even if they do not belong to the clan. There are two kinds of cross-cousins, which I have previously mentioned, and one of these is forbidden (*kō*) while the other is not (*hæm*).

¹⁾ R. H. Lowie: *Primitive society*. New York, 1920, p. 108.

²⁾ Lowie, *op. cit.*, p. 262.

³⁾ E. C. Parsons: "Avoidance in Melanesia." *Journal of American Folk-Lore*, XXIX, pp. 282—292, 1916.

Levirate exists among the Lamet. They consider that a man really should marry the widow of a dead brother. If he does not wish to marry her, he is in any case obliged to support her, and then she automatically belongs to his household. On the other hand, if she wishes to marry some other man, she must then have the consent of her brother-in-law, and the man that marries her must pay her brother-in-law the bride price. This coheres with the fact that a woman is regarded as property of the household. A member thereof has once paid the bride price for her, or fulfilled the necessary years of service.

Sororate is considered suitable, but a man is not obliged to marry his wife's sister. However, I observed several cases of this in the villages.

Polygyny exists among the Lamet, but there are only a few who have taken a second wife (see tab. 7). This is mostly a question of prestige, and only a rich man can afford several wives. In Mokala Panghay there was only one man who had three wives. The other polygamous men were satisfied with two. Even if a man's first wife has several children, he always tries to get hold of an extra wife, if he can afford it, for it increases the working power of the family to a great degree. The first wife rules, and the others must obey her. The latter usually have to perform the heavier work. However, they live together in the same house as the rest of the family. In a later chapter (chap. 12) I shall return to the economical importance of polygyny. Whether polygyny coheres with a surplus of women, I am not in a position to state. I have taken a census only in Mokala Panghay, and here there was a decided surplus of women. But we cannot judge from only one village.

It is not only the different kinds of kinship that form an obstacle for marriage, for class distinction also plays a part. Thus among the Lamet there is a group of rich men who in a way make up their own class. They are called *lem*, and we shall treat of this in the following chapter. A poor man therefore often meets many difficulties in an effort to marry the daughter of a *lem*. Among the Upper Lamet it cannot be done at all, since class distinction is more marked there. On the other hand, certain difficulties stand in the way among the Lower Lamet. This is due to the fact that a *lem* demands a greater bride price. But since marriage is for the most an exchange of valuables and services, a large bride price also necessitates a large dowry, consisting of things that can be of value in the winning of prestige.

Since the villages are very small, there can be a scarcity of unmarried women, or more probably the young men can be related in one way or

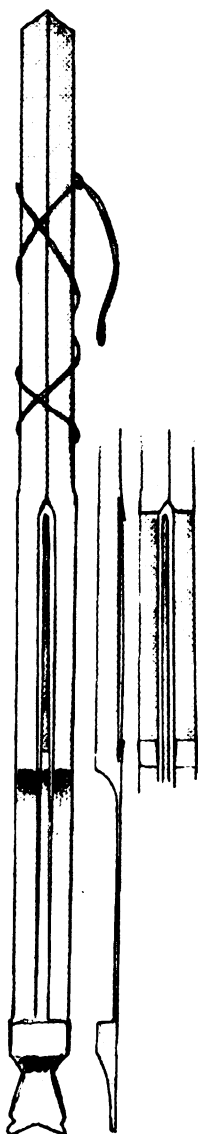


Fig. 33. Jew's harp.

another to most of the girls of the village. This can be the cause of difficulty, and several young men complained to me that they were forced to visit other villages in order to find suitable marriage partners. However, it does not seem to be the rule that the young men make special trips with courting in mind, at least not in any organized way. Usually the men have errands in the neighboring villages, perhaps they go to Houeisai or Thai villages for the purpose of trading or buying and selling, and they then take the opportunity of visiting other villages on the way, and thus meet the young women there. No jealousy or covetousness in this respect seems to exist between the villages.

Marriage is preceded by a fairly long period of night courting, when the parties concerned can live openly with each other. This takes place by the young men serenading the girls after sundown with a kind of jew's harp made of bamboo. This instrument has only a weak tone, but is quite plainly audible. One can play different melodies on it, or more correctly, rhythms, which are understood by the girls. If the lover is fortunate, the young girl of the house comes out on the veranda, where he is invited to have a talk. The girl then rolls cigarettes for him. The young couple then continue on the berth belonging to the unmarried girls, but they are not supposed to go there until other members of the household have gone to sleep. In time marriage is decided upon, and both families get together to decide on the amount of the bride price. A poor man replaces the bride price with service marriage, that is to say he must live in his father-in-law's house and work for him.

Service marriage is nearly always the case, however, and the length of this service depends on the size of the bride price, and how much of this is paid in cash.

The bride price varies a good deal, depending on the circumstances of the contractors. Among the Lower Lamet one usually pays from two to four buffaloes on marrying, and sometimes gongs are the means of exchange or perhaps even — more rarely — a bronze drum. Money is

not in use in these villages, with the exception of copper and silver billets of special shape which in olden times were used as coins. However, these are seen very seldom nowadays. Among the Lower Lamet it is always the father of the house who pays for his son, and the payments are made now and again during the time that the service years last. A buffalo is considered to be worth about thirty piasters — 300 francs (in 1937) — and is equivalent to a year of work in the service marriage. Thus, if a man can pay all the buffaloes demanded for the bride price, he does not need to work for his father-in-law. But as a rule buffaloes and service marriage are combined, so that a man goes into service for perhaps three years, and the rest is paid off in the form of buffaloes.

The rule is the same among the Upper Lamet, that is, a man who has not the money to pay the bride price must work in the home of the parents-in-law. Here the time is limited to three years. In these villages it is not the father who pays, but the sons themselves. They travel to Siam to work and save the money demanded for the bride price.

If a girl marries a lem and is herself the daughter of a lem, the girl's father gives the following as a dowry: old silk fabrics, bracelets and jewels, cheap Chinese porcelain bowls, Laotic gowns, etc. With the exception of the jewels and the Laotic gowns, which are for the girl herself, the other things are intended only for the feasts given for the ancestors. The mere existence of such things in a home gives prestige to its members.

The husband's family pays the bride price in buffaloes, gongs or bronze drums, and if the girl's family is rich and of good standing, the number of buffaloes can climb to five or six. But even in this case, when two lem family members marry, service marriage is generally the rule. Usually the husband must work from four to five years for his parents-in-law, over and above the price he has paid for his bride. If he does not wish to spend so much time there, his family must pay still another buffalo per year, according to the agreement the two families reach.

If the son of a lem marries a poor girl, he gives the father-in-law only one buffalo.

As I stated previously, the daughter of a lem among the Upper Lamet cannot marry a poor boy, since all property in these villages belongs to the housefather and not the house group in common. However, if a poor boy in spite of everything still wants to marry a lem daughter, he can make an agreement with her to wait a few years for him, so that he can have time to work for and save such a sum, that he, too, can be considered to be a lem. He goes then to the Siamese teak woods or the tobacco planta-

tions, and tries to earn the required sum. In Siam also there are possibilities of buying bronze drums among the Karen tribes, and the young Lamet men often related for me how many of them had made their fortunes there. They told with admiration of one young Lamet who had gone into business in Chiangmai, and who had a fortune of as much as one hundred bronze drums. Even in their songs there creeps forth this longing for the regions where they can buy bronze drums. As we shall see further on, this valuation of bronze drums has a strong influence on the economic life of the Lamet.

Thus we see that bride price and dowry are an exchange between two families, and they vary according to the wealth of the families. The more prestige a family has, the greater is the bride price demanded for the daughters, and accordingly, the more valuable the dowry.

I can give an example of the contents of a dowry in Mokala Panghay. They told of a girl who had married and taken along to her new home the following: a Laotic *sampot* of silk (*sampot* — a sort of hip cloth in ikat technique, usually about six or seven meters long), a wine jug, a Chinese bowl, an axe, a chopping knife, a lance, a turban of red cotton cloth, and two skirts of cotton, and a few silver bracelets, and a sort of spiral band of coarse brass, which is worn around the waist by women. Thus all the things that the girl had with her were bought, and were not produced by the Lamet. These valuables are often inherited, but sometimes have been acquired by the girl herself, as we shall see farther on, by her having independently cleared a bit of ground and cultivated rice there, which was the means for which she could buy some of these things. On the other hand, a man, besides giving his services, pays with more masculine things, such as buffaloes.

Where a man is very poor and marries a girl as poor as himself, the bride price can be reduced to only a pig. But such a marriage gives no prestige among the Lamet, and both parties are looked down upon.

If a man wants a second wife, he must pay the same amount in bride price, but it will be more difficult in the matter of working for his parents-in-law. He should then have enough money to at least pay off the greater part of the bride price. However, it is a simple matter if his second wife is poor.

When the marriage contract is drawn up by the two families, they perform a little ceremony called *tuktī*, which means "tying round the wrists." This ceremony is the same as that in use among the Lao, and there called *basi*. This custom seems to have originated in India. The

procedure is that a couple of roosters or a pig is sacrificed, and after long incantations, the wrists of those partaking in the ceremony are bound. It is then considered that "the souls are fastened to the bodies." This rite is constantly performed on all important occasions among the Lamet, and is partly a kind of welfare ceremony, and implies really a wish for success and the keeping of good health. The ceremony is followed by a little feast of eating and drinking together.

Birth

In order to get children, a pig is sacrificed to the ancestor spirits of the wife, and when she becomes pregnant yet another pig is sacrificed; this is repeated once more when the first-born arrives. The woman's father performs all these sacrifices.

As a matter of fact, the Lamet believe that the possibility of there being any children lies in the power of the wife's ancestor spirits. They know, of course, that all must go in a purely natural way, but they maintain that if the ancestor spirits are not friendly, no children will come. The chief in Mokala Panghay related for me that it was quite a long time before his first wife had a child. He was obliged to go to her village and deliver a pig which her father sacrificed at his altar of ancestors.

In order to know whether the child is to be a boy or a girl, one catches a crab and then lets it loose in the water. If it sinks deep the child will be a girl, and if it does not go so deep it will be a boy. When the child is born, one cuts off the navel cord with a bamboo knife. It is then laid in a bamboo tube, and a *talā* is tied to the tube. Later on the father of the child goes out in the woods and fastens the tube to a tree. The same things is done with the afterbirth.

When the child is born, *tuktā* is performed for the mother, and a pig is sacrificed to the ancestor spirits. After the birth, bandages are wound tightly around the woman's stomach, and for thirty days she is not allowed to do any hard work outside of the village, but she does not lie in childbed longer than twenty-four hours. The reason for her being forbidden to leave the village is, that dangerous spirits might attack her, for such run riot outside the two magic gates of the village.

The Lamet also sit and watch over the woman who is about to give birth, for they are worried that a certain spirit called *phi phai* might harm the mother and child. This spirit is that of a woman who died in childbirth. Immediately after birth the child is bathed, and women from other house-

holds come and help with this. The father is also forbidden to work outside the village for ten days. The Lamet know nothing about *couvade*.

If a boy is born, a flint-lock gun or a crossbow is hung over the child's head. When the child is a girl, a *tug*, that is, a flat winnow of plaited work used in winnowing rice, and a mortar and pestle are placed near the child. When a woman is in the process of giving birth, all in the village must be absolutely quiet, and afterwards the mother must not touch salted food for thirty days.

If twins are born it is considered to be unlucky, especially if the twins are boys, for then the father must soon die. In order to prevent this, the father kills a buffalo and sacrifices it to his ancestor spirits, and if he cannot afford this, a pig will have to suffice. When the twins consist of a boy and a girl, the girl is killed. The dead child is placed in a basket and buried in the earth, and a stone is placed on top.

Death and Burial

A few words about burial rites among the Lamet, in spite of the fact that I have not seen more than one burial. This took place in Mokala Panghay where a ten-year-old girl died. One night I was awakened by a most terrible wailing which came from the side of the street opposite to that where my house stood. My servants told me that a little girl who had been ill a few days had died. The wailing continued all that night and the three following days and nights. The cries became some sort of monotonous melodies, and it was difficult to distinguish the words. However, I managed to catch the often repeated verbs "*kū yom peyom*," which means: "She did not die, but was killed." They suspected that she had been killed by black magic performed by a man that her father had quarreled with. The following day her relatives came and placed lances outside the entrance to the house to prevent the spirit of death from spreading out to other houses. Besides, fires were lighted at the entrance for the same purpose, and they burned the whole time until the burial was over. Meanwhile the male relatives made a coffin from a hollowed-out tree-trunk out in the woods. This was placed beside the grave, and thus was not taken to the village at all. That half of the village where the house of the dead girl stood, was now closed to the people from the other half. The village square and the village street themselves divided the village into two halves, which thus should have no contact with each other. The same division took place in the community house. The men from one side

were allowed to use only that entrance which opened towards their houses, and to use only the hearth that lay nearest that entrance. The inhabitants of the two village halves were not even allowed to speak to each other. All this was because of fear for the spirit of death, which they thought was contagious. The Lamet believe that the spirits can hang on clothes and enter bodies, and thus be taken along by human beings wherever they go. Certain spirits cannot cross open places alone, and the spirit of death is among these, and also, as we shall see farther on, the soul of rice. Moreover, the family of the dead girl were forbidden to wear headgear of any sort, and the men shaved the front part of the crown of the head. Besides, all members of the family were forbidden to converse with other people, and forbidden to leave the village grounds for sixty days, apart from attending the burial.

At the funeral the dead body was borne on a litter by men, and the male relatives followed in procession supporting themselves with their lances. Last of all came the girl's father and mother, both with their hair hanging loose.

Before the funeral procession started, two pigs were sacrificed, and I heard long incantations repeated. I would have liked to make a note of them, but no Lamet living on my side of the village dared to repeat them for me. I could only find out that they spoke to the spirit of death, telling it to go away to the village of the dead on the other side of the Mekong. The way was described in the incantations. Later on while the funeral procession made its way through the village, all the men about me mumbled long incantations which they were unwilling to repeat. Unfortunately I was not allowed to follow after and see the burial, and no one dared to tell me where the girl was buried. I discovered the grave by pure chance a couple of months later, and had the opportunity of photographing it. Of course this took place entirely without the knowledge of the Lamet.

When the funeral procession had returned to the village, they set about driving out the rest of the spirits of death that were to be found in the house. They stamped, jumped, and shrieked and wailed, and boys and men ran about with torches inside the house, and all tools and furniture were carried out to the yard and left standing there. Suddenly all the lamentation ceased, the spirits of death had been driven away, and the men could take their lances, and the fires in front of the house were extinguished.

"Unfortunately," this is the only Lamet burial I had the opportunity of witnessing. If it had been that of an older person, the customs and



Fig. 34. The grave of the young girl.
The fence is damaged.

ceremonies would have been decidedly more formal. As a matter of fact, a burial is quite an important event for a Lamet family if the dead person is elderly and has children. In that case, buffaloes are slaughtered, and great feasts take place like those held for the ancestor spirits, and sometimes they are even greater. It all depends upon how rich the dead man was. This means that burial is one of the greatest expenses of the Lamet, and it is evident that such an event encroaches on the economic life to quite an extent. Since the whole community life of the Lamet revolves around the cult of ancestors, an important item being the burial of persons with children, these rites naturally are of great interest to

those who want to understand their conceptions and the driving forces in their economic life. Therefore I tried in every way to find out as much as possible about incantations and prayers, manners and customs at burials, but everyone that I questioned was tight-mouthed on the subject. It was unfortunate that I did not live in the same half of the village as the girl who died, as I was not allowed to go there to find out anything.

The girl's grave lay off in the woods, not far from a path that led to a group of barns. Beside hers there was another, but no more. However, I have since then seen a large burial place where there were several graves. Evidently several elderly persons had quite recently been buried, for the whole place reeked of rotten buffalo skins which hung over the graves.

A grave is usually arranged so that two stones are placed on it, one over the head of the dead person, and the other over the knees. The purpose of these stones is to fasten the two souls of a human being to the earth, for according to the conception of the Lamet, they have one soul in the head, and one in the knees. The two souls meet in the region of the navel, and over this part of the body a kind of dolmen consisting of four stone slabs is placed, the

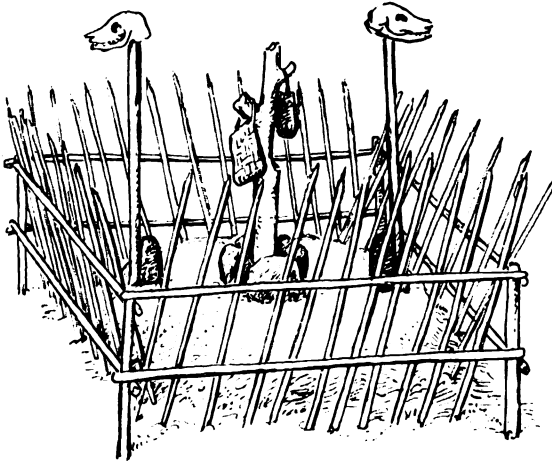


Fig. 35. Drawing of the grave in fig. 34.

slabs being arranged so that they form a square box. In the middle of these stands a pole, which is a tree whose branches are partly chopped off. Here are placed one of the skulls of the sacrificed animals, and some of the belongings of the dead person. Sacrifice poles are driven in the earth beside the other two stones, at the top of which animal skulls are hung. The grave is then enclosed with a fence consisting of pointed rods or bamboo spears about one meter in length, which are placed on the slant in an upward and outward direction. Instead of a pole in the middle, some graves have a staff, at the top of which there is a cross something like that on a weathercock. Some sort of figure is placed on the points of the cross, but the Lamet do not know the meaning of these. I have also seen on graves a little house, or more correctly, a miniature model of a house set up on this middle staff. The dolmen and the little house are called the home of the dead.

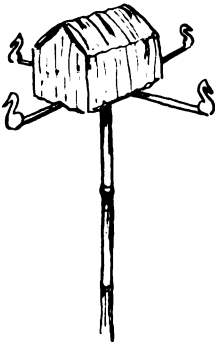


Fig. 36. "The home of the dead."

In the village of Sithoun I saw an old deserted graveyard, and noticed there that certain stones were unusually long. As a rule the stones on the graves do not stand more than two or three decimeters above the mound of the grave. But certain graves had such large stones that they stood as high as one meter. I asked the Lamet men that were with me what this meant, and received the answer that

only rich men had the means for delivering such large stones up there. This reminds one of the Naga tribes, where the acquiring of very large stones gives prestige.

When a man dies, he is dressed in his best clothes and then covered with a *sampot* of silk. As already mentioned, silk sampots are also used as dowry and in connection with the feasts for the ancestor spirits. In addition, the dead man is given wooden knives when he is laid in the coffin. The grave of a man is decorated with his crossbow and wallet, and tools, and that of a woman with an apparatus for distilling rice wine, and a few broken vessels, and moreover, baskets and a "rain-coat" are hung on the middle pole of the grave.

If the dead man had owned a gong, and had no heirs, they strike on the gong until it goes to pieces, and then this is laid on the grave. The same is done with a bronze drum. On the other hand, if he has heirs, he arranges a will verbally in which the sons shall inherit these things. Usually, moreover, he advises his sons never to sell bronze drums and gongs. Old Tapía in Mokala Panghay owned two bronze drums, and he told me that he had decided that his three sons were to have them in common. When they had saved up enough from their earnings to buy a third drum, then they could divide up the inheritance. When a buffalo is slaughtered for a burial, it is not tied to the regular sacrifice pole outside the dwelling, but instead it is led to the steps of the house. I could not get an explanation for this custom, but it is evident that the buffalo has some connection with the spirit of death or the ancestor spirits.

I shall not go further in detail regarding the burial rites of the Lamet in this book.¹⁾ The important thing to note here, is the economic importance of the burial rites, and I shall return to this in Chapter 15.

The Extended Family

Among the Lamet a family consists of a man with one or several wives, their children, and the wives of the sons and their children. Besides, there can also be included a married daughter and son-in-law who fulfill service marriage. However, this must be regarded as the ideal case, for variations from this patrilineal group often occur. In fact, we must not only take into consideration this biological unifying, but its locality as well.

¹⁾ A lesser survey of these has already been published. See K. G. Izikowitz: Fastening the soul. Göteborgs Högskolas Årsskrift XLVII. Göteborg, 1941.

An extended family, if it sticks together, forms a household and lives in one house. I call such a unit a house group. It is this unit that is the most important of all the groupings in the community of the Lamet. It is typical that a word for family is lacking in Lamet, and they say *n'ā* (house) instead, and mean by this a household or house group. However, such a house group does not necessarily have to include an entire extended family, but can also be just a part of it.

The extended family can be regarded as the ideal for the Lamet, a co-operative unit for many different kinds of activity, and in various situations. For reasons which I shall explain in the next chapter, this family is all too often split up, and therefore we should not study the family as a biological group, but rather start with the house group, and study its relation to the extended family. I shall return to this in the following chapter.

The extended family as a local house group is even dominant among the Thai peoples. In order to show what proportions this can reach, I shall digress a little, and describe an incident about the Black Thai in Upper Tonkin.

On the last day that I spent among the Black Thai, I heard the following interesting story from one of the higher functionaries in Muong Khuai. He related this one as if it were something rather peculiar: "There was a widow who had several children, and since she was very poor her children were adopted into other families. In this way they came to live in different houses, and when the children grew up, it was considered quite proper for those who had not lived in the same house to marry each other, in spite of the fact that they were sisters and brothers." This proves that exogamy in this case was not decided by biological relationship, but by the house. This means that the house group was more vital than the family group. In other words, a shifting of "the center of gravity" has taken place between two coupled group factors: biological relationship and locality, that is to say, the fear of incest has been shifted over to the factor of locality. I could not find out whether any special adoption ceremony for the ancestor spirits is connected here or not. It was, as I said, the last day I could spend among the Black Thai. It is possible, however, that if such a ceremony exists, one becomes "spiritually" related to the house group. When a Lamet adopts a child, he performs a special ceremony for the ancestor spirits, or the ceremony takes place during the great feasts held for these spirits. However, I have not come across a case like that quoted from the Black Thai among the Lamet, but the parallel in connection with the two group-forming factors is quite striking.

CHAPTER 6.

The People of the Village

The village and its surroundings, its woods, hunting grounds and clearing places, form the world where the Lamet have their activity. So far we have been chiefly concerned only with the stage where life is played out in all its phases and situations, or, more correctly, to the stage and its "wings," and we have moreover investigated how the persons there are organized. Now we shall go farther and see how these persons are grouped in the village, and how they reciprocate.

Before we go into this, it might be of interest to say something about what the Lamet look like. Unfortunately I cannot do this scientifically, for I am not a physical anthropologist, and did not undertake the making of measurements. I shall let the pictures speak for themselves.

A few general remarks may illuminate the photographs of the people. The Lamet are comparatively short in stature, about 160 cm. in length, this in regard to the men, while the women are even shorter. Different anthropological types can be distinguished, but I have never come across any who in any way resembled Negritos. In literature on the subject, it is often mentioned that such appear among the primitive tribes of Further India. However, as I said before, I have never seen any among the Lamet. On the contrary, one often sees individuals, and sometimes whole families who are of Veddoid type. These are rather small, graceful persons, with large eyes, often wavy hair, and the women have conically shaped breasts. Among the other types to be seen are a rather tall, lightbrown type, and a broader, more squat type with wide face and usually darker complexion. The long, oval-shaped face seen among the Akha tribes further north in the province of Haut-Mékong never occurs among the Lamet. Generally speaking, it can be said that the Lamet resemble the Malays in type. I had with me at the time some books about the Philippine tribes of Luzon, and their resemblance to the Lamet was striking. I amused myself with showing these pictures to the Lamet, and they were quite certain that they were pictures of their own people.

Nowadays the Lamet are quite well-dressed. The women wear a blouse and skirt, and only women who have children bare the upper part of the

body. The men wear blouse and trousers. They buy their clothes from the Lu in Tafá because the Lamet can neither spin nor weave. Moreover, the custom of wearing clothes is of recent date among the Lamet. They learned of it first through contact with the Thai peoples. Even as late as the beginning of the 20th century, they did not use Thai costumes. A man's clothing at that time consisted of a kind of breech cloth (*vār*). This was first tied about the waist and then drawn from the back between the legs and stopped in under the belt. What was left over hung loose in front, as seen in fig. 37. The women wore only a short loin cloth, or rather a bit of cloth which was wound about the hips and hung down to the knees, and looked something like a skirt. In olden times cloth was not used for this old costume, for the only thing they had access to was bark cloth, which they themselves had to prepare. This appears even today in a village in the Lamet district, but is used here only for sleeping mats. However, the old style of clothing is not completely forgotten, and during the warmest part of the year I often saw boys and sometimes old men go about dressed only in a breech cloth. Now, the peculiar thing about all this is the feeling of shame that has accompanied the acceptance of clothes. A woman who has not as yet had children is very shy about showing the upper part of her body. It is strange that this feeling of shame has developed so fast, for it is not more than forty years since all the women went about with the upper part of the body bare.



Fig. 37.
Breech cloth
(*vār*).

The Lamet men all wear a turban, a custom they have learned from the Burmans, as they say. A man's hair is set up in a knot in the center of the crown of the head, and the knot is fastened with the quill of a porcupine, which serves as hairpin. The Lamet always assert that those who wear the knot up on the crown of the head are Lamet, while those who wear it on the neck are Khmu. The Lamet women arrange their hair in the same way, but instead of a turban they wear a wide band, which is bound several times about the head so that it forms a cylinder. The hair is combed often, and for this purpose a stick-comb is used, which the Lamet themselves make.

The ears are always pierced, and earrings of bamboo or some such ornament is worn in them. Often flowers are placed in the holes. In olden times big discs were worn, from which cords were hung, often hanging quite low down over the body. It is said that these are used even now in certain Lamet villages.



Fig. 38. The village chief of Ban Tup.

Government

At the time of my stay among the Lamet, they were governed by the French. In the province of Haut-Mékong all the Lamet villages formed a special canton, and had a Laotic official as chief. The Lamet living in the protectorate of Luangprabang were, on the contrary, under the jurisdiction of a Laotic *tiao-muong*. The tax bailiffs were partly Lu and partly Lao. Each village has its chief, who is responsible for handing over the money for taxes to the tax bailiffs, for supplying travellers with bearers, etc.

Before the French laid claim to the Lamet district, part of it belonged to Siam, and the tax bailiffs were appointed among the Lamet themselves. Thus there were three tax bailiffs or *tasseng* as they are called, in the province of Haut-Mékong. This system continued for a long time, even after the arrival of the French, but later these offices were turned over to the Lu, who had wandered in, for they, in contrast to the Lamet, could read and write.

In spite of this relatively modern administration under Siamese, Laotic, and French rule, there has hardly been any organization that could keep the villages united. It is said, to be sure, that at one time there was a chief in Mokahang Tai who ruled over eight Lamet villages. However, he had a Siamese title of nobility, and served mostly as tax bailiff. I have not discovered the slightest trace of any original organization between the villages of the Lamet themselves. In reality, each village forms a unit for itself. The chiefs of today are appointed by the French, and this institution existed at least partly under the Siamese period. But even this is not original for the Lamet, for they have no real chief as a matter of fact. What most resembles a chief in the Lamet villages, is the priest of sacrifice, *xəmiā*.

The xəmiā.

There is only one *xəmiā* in each village, and his office is hereditary in the male line. If he has no sons, his office goes over to one of his nephews on his brothers' side. The duty of the priest of sacrifice is to perform all

the sacrifices made to the different spirits of the village, and also to see that order is kept in the village, so that the village spirits are not disturbed. He has also supervision of the community house (*éng yig*) and all that goes on there. In this way his power is limited to the village itself, or rather to the section where people live, for he has no jurisdiction over the lands, the clearings, or the woods belonging to the village. When new houses are to be built in the village, or when a new village is to be founded, it is the priest of sacrifice who officiates as "building committee." At feasts and ceremonies which are taken part in by the whole village, or performed simultaneously by all in the village, it is the *xamiä* who decides which days are, and which are not suitable for the occasion.

Because of his office, he thus acquires a fair amount of power in the village district itself, since the inhabitants of the village are dependent to a great degree on the spirits of the village, who protect them against epidemics and illness, and the approach of dangerous spirits, and who are also responsible for their supply of drinking water. To a certain degree the village spirits influence even the harvest. Owing to his position, the village priest becomes also a kind of police, since he must constantly prevent anyone disturbing the benignity of the spirits of the village. For this reason he must always be consulted first in everything that takes place within the limits of the village itself.

His authority in the village can therefore be considerable, but it varies in the different villages, possibly depending upon his personality. But his wealth also plays a part in this case. For example, it happened that in a couple of villages the people set themselves in opposition to the priest, and the explanation for this was for the most that he had not acquired any prestige through wealth. This priest was also chief of the village, which is quite usual since the priest is preferably chosen as chief. Once when he wanted to select some men for road work, they simply went on strike, and he had no means for getting them to obey. In this case, however, he stood outside of his authority as priest of sacrifice, and only carried out the order of the canton leader as chief of the village. As long as the priest deals with purely religious affairs, he is obeyed, but when he tries to function as chief without having the prestige of a rich man, he has no power of command. The Lamet simply could not understand the concept "chief." On the other hand, the priest could have unlimited power in other villages. Such was the case in Mokala Panghay, for example. In this village the priest himself was not chief of the village, but had entrusted the job to his brother's son, but the latter never dared to make a deci-



Fig. 39. The *xəmiā* of Mokala Panghay dressed in a skirt given by the author.

sion without first consulting the *xəmiā*. Practically all the inhabitants of the village feared the wrath of the priest. In Mokala the priest kept strict order in the village, and was very particular that especially the village square was kept clean. It was swept daily and the refuse burned, possibly for some reason connected with magic. On the other hand, it was not so particular in some other villages in regard to hygiene, and there it was usually the case that the priest lacked authority. This is especially noticeable among the Upper Lamet, where the young men have been in Siam and absorbed new ideas.

If the *xəmiā* has several sons, one of these is looked upon as heir to the title when the father dies. Should none of these be considered suitable, the office can be assumed instead by a nephew on the male side. It is the married men of the village who choose the priest of sacrifice, and they assemble in the community house in order to appoint candidates. It can happen that there will be an equal vote for two candidates, and the village becomes divided into two fractions. If they cannot come to an agreement, then the village is divided, and both candidates become priests, each in his own village. This was told me by the priest in Ban Xang, who said also that the eldest son of a priest cannot always be appointed as his successor, e. g., if he is not intelligent enough, or if he should have a bad reputation.

In Ban Noi a disagreement like the one described above occurred between two brothers, sons of the deceased priest. One of these was unbelievably vain. He was a little man with a violent temper, who gesticulated wildly and boasted more than any Lamet I have ever met. At the same time, however, he was a very capable man, and I have to admit that he could arrange things extremely well. But he was known to be exceptionally ambitious and even grasping, and all these characteristics together made him unbearable among the people of his village. His brother was quite the opposite in character, a quiet, mild type, who had dignity and an aristocratic appearance. Both brothers were set up as candidates, but nobody wanted the little boastful man, and the result was that he left the village and built a cottage for himself a few hundred meters outside the village. He thought that a few families would follow him and found a new village, but none came. This was the only case of an isolated homestead that I came across among the Lamet. In spite of there being only one house, the man also had a *čyγ yig* of considerable size.

The priest is forbidden to eat certain things. In the village of Sithoun the *xamiā* told me that for the first three years after being appointed priest he was not allowed to cut cane or palm leaves, nor should he eat the meat of monkeys, snakes, or tigers. If he should do these things he would lose the respect of the spirits.

Why the office of the priest is hereditary, I cannot say. His business concerns the spirits of the village, really, and judging from a tale from Mokahang Tai, the spirit of the village is considered to be the original founder of the village community.¹⁾ The village spirit's cult points thus to a kind of hero cult. This is seen to some degree also in the plan of the community house, since it is built in the form of a grave. This can very possibly have some connection with similar community erections in Annam and China, and besides reminds us of a custom existing among some Naga peoples and Khassi, where prominent men are sometimes buried within the village, and where great memorial stones are erected on their graves. However, we still have to investigate whether memorial and burial stones among the peoples referred to have any connection with the founders of villages. This is a departure which I cannot follow up here, but rather in connection with other comparative studies.

When a man's authority was great enough to enable him to found a village, it is easily understood that he then could appoint his son or

¹⁾ K. G. Izikowitz: The community house of the Lamet. *Ethnos* vol. 8. Stockholm, 1943, p. 34.

other suitable person among his kin as priest of sacrifice. It is of course a rather particular job and demands a certain amount of ability, since the priest must know all the formulas and all that must be done for the village spirit, which naturally requires some time for him to learn, for example, by means of training in the home of his father. The knowledge remains within the family, so to speak. Again, the village spirit belongs in a way to his own kin, it can be the spirit of a dead ancestor, and then naturally a son should know better than anyone else how it should be treated. However, all these suggestions are things that can be solved only by means of new field research, and could possibly be observed in villages which are in the process of being founded, or of recent erection.

Besides this priest, there is also a medicine man (*mō!*) in the village. His function is only to heal the sick, or more correctly, to try to find out which spirits are the cause of sickness, and where lost souls who have left the body have gone; moreover, he performs the sacrifices for the demons of sickness. The medicine men have no power in the village, and no particular position of rank. They are not paid for their work, and have no special privileges. The *xamiā* are not paid either.

Lem.

A very important group of men in a position of great power, are the richest men of the village, the so-called *lem*, that is, the owners of a number of bronze drums and buffaloes. This group of men can almost be considered as a sort of "nobility," in spite of the fact that the *lem* status is not necessarily hereditary. A man who has become rich enough can be classed as *lem*. The opposite of *lem*, that is the common people, are called *tō*.



Fig. 40. Tapia.

One single bronze drum is not enough to entitle a man to becoming a *lem*. He should really have two, and besides those, at least five or six buffaloes. When a man has acquired such a capital, he is declared to be a *lem* at a feast held in his honor by his equals in the village. On such an occasion (*plok*) two hens are sacrificed and the *tuktī* ceremony is performed for him. Then a new silk turban is wound about his head.

In order to acquire so much wealth as a bronze drum represents, one must cut large

clearings in the forest and have a large family, the Lamet explained to me. Every Lamet man dreams of someday becoming so rich that he can belong to the chosen few, and therefore it is his business to found a large family, to work hard and economize and save, so that his wealth can grow. When he at last becomes a *lem*, his prestige in the village is great, and he can be considered to have reached his goal here on earth. If later on he continues to acquire bronze drums and buffaloes, which he uses for the sacrifice to the ancestor spirits, he then gets well-being for the whole family, and his harvests will be rich.

The *lem* have no particularly greater privileges. At the feasts they are allowed to drink rice wine before the others, and when strangers are received they are the hosts. If they want a good clearing which is easily hewn and lies near the village, they get it. "We don't argue about such things," an old Lamet man said to me.

When an animal is slaughtered, or when game is cut into pieces, each and every one in the village gets his share, but the *lem* get especially large portions.

The *lem* are considered to be the most prominent men of the village, and they have the most power. They also function as some sort of judge or jury in disputes between villages and also between persons. They must also be paid a certain sum for serving as go-between. This sum is called *putatôt*. In case of a fight, for example, the fine is two piasters, in case of rape, five piasters, and the amount is divided up among the *lem* in the jury.

Elsewhere (see p. 101 seq.) I have already mentioned that special conditions must be observed when the daughter of a *lem* is to be married.

The *lem* rank is not hereditary, but if the sons of a *lem* maintain such wealth that it can entitle them to their father's position, they can also be appointed as *lem*. If a *lem* loses his bronze drums and buffaloes, he can no longer be considered to belong to the *lem* class.

After buying a bronze drum, a man must first sacrifice a hen to the drum's spirit (*phi klô*). He then performs *tuktî* by tying cords of cotton to the frog ornament on the drum, and then sticking feathers and blood onto the star ornament placed in the middle of the drum, while he recites magic spells containing a prayer that he may get even



Fig. 41. Ai Nhi, Tapia's brother.

more drums and many buffaloes. When a couple of months have passed, this man must hold a feast for his ancestors and sacrifice a buffalo, and he is obliged to invite all the inhabitants of the village to this ceremony. "When a man has got hold of a drum, it follows that he gets many buffaloes. A *klo* (bronze drum) brings health to all in the family," is what the Lamet usually say when speaking of bronze drums.

Abbreviations used in table 5.

All men have *Ai* placed before their name.

All women have *I* placed before their name.

(*Ai* means brother, *I* woman, in Yuan.)

w = wife of

h = husband of (when the son-in-law lives with his parents-in-law)

s = son of

d = daughter of

ys = younger sister of

os = older sister of

yb = younger brother of

ob = older brother of

w 1 = wife of no. 1 in the house

w₁ 1 = wife of first rank of no. 1

w₂ 1 = wife of second rank of no. 1

d IV 1 = daughter of no. 1 in house IV

d₂ 1 = daughter of no. 1 and his wife of second rank

d₁ IV 1 = daughter of no. 1 in house IV and his wife of first rank

TABLE 5. The Inhabitants of Mokala Panghay.

House no. I¹⁾Clan: *pōś*

Members: 5

No.	Name	Age	Birth place	Kinship	Remarks
1	Ai Ram	30	Hang	yb VII 1	<i>čait</i> -A
2	I Ven	20		w 1 (d ₁ VI. 1)	
3	I Eng	2		d 1	
4	I Ai	1		d 1	
5	I Ui	27		ys 1	widow

House no. II

Clan: *mpōl*

Members: 7

No.	Name	Age	Birth place	Kinship	Remarks
1	Ai Sen	46	Hang	brother's son XI ₁ , ob XV 2	foster son XI 1
2	I I	40	Nam Lang	w 1, d V 1	<i>čait</i> -B, cross-cousin 1
3	I Ven	20	Hang	d 1	
4	Ai Kam	6		s 1	
5	Ai Kom	5		s 1	
6	Ai Hang	4		s 1	
7	Ai Si	3		s 1	

House no. III

Clan: *tavo*

Members: 3

No.	Name	Age	Birth place	Kinship	Remarks
1	Ai Soi	53	Nam Lang	—	Khmu
2	I Nui	50	Nam Lang	w 1, d V 1	<i>čait</i> -B
3	Ai Soi	5		s 1	

¹⁾ The house numbers are seen in Roman numerals on the village map of Mokala Panghay (fig. 8), p. 55.

TABLE 5. (cont.)

House no. IV Clan: *čait-A* Members: 11

No.	Name	Age	Birth place	Kinship	Remarks
1	Ai Črum	67	Ban Leng	yb XIII 1	ex-chief of the village
2	I Nga †	†		brothers daughter XV 1, w ₁ 1	<i>mpōl</i>
3	I Noi	40	Hang	w ₂ 1, d XV 1	<i>mpōl</i>
4	Ai Sai	32		s ₁ 1	
5	Ai Kai	29		s ₁ 1	
6	Ai Kui	18		s ₁ 1	
(7	I Si	30		d ₁ 1	married in VII)
8	I Vang	20		d ₁ 1	
9	I Ven	17		d ₁ 1	
10	Ai Soi †	†		s ₂ 1	
11	I Oi	30		w 5, d IX 1	<i>čait-B</i> (Khmu)
12	I Ui	30	Hang	w 4, ys X 1	<i>mpōl</i>
13	Ai Kom	4		s 4	
14	I Ui	20	Moksouk	w 6	<i>čait-B</i> (Khmu)

House no. V Clan: *čait-B* Members: 1

No.	Name	Age	Birth place	Kinship	Remarks
1	Ai Čang	80	Nam Lang	—	the oldest man of the village, daughters: II 2; III 2; VI 2; VI 3
2	I Oui †			—	

House no. VI Clan: *čait-A* Members: 11

No.	Name	Age	Birth place	Kinship	Remarks
1	Ai Kam	52	Ban Leng	yb XIX 1	medicine man
2	I Oi	45	Nam Lang	w ₁ 1, d V 1	<i>čait-B</i>
3	I Rang	32		w ₂ 1, d V 1	<i>čait-B</i>
4	Ai Čaruom (I Ven)	28		s ₁ 1 d ₁ 1 (married, lives in I)	
5	I Ui	21		d ₁ 1	
6	I Nang	15		d ₁ 1, w 6	
7	I Noi	13		d ₁ 1	
8	Ai Pi	9		s ₂ 1	
9	Ai Koi	3		s ₂ 1	
10	Ai Hang	22	Pangsay	h 6 (son-in-law)	<i>pōs</i>
11	I Nang	25	Pangsay	w 4	<i>tav</i>

TABLE 5. (cont.)

House no. VII Clan: *pōs* Members: 3

No.	Name	Age	Birth place	Kinship	Remarks
1	I Vai	40	Hang	os I 1	widow
2	Ai Si	12	Mokala Luang	s 1	
3	I Sen	8	Mokala Luang	d 1	

House no. VIII Clan: *čait-B* Members: 5

No.	Name	Age	Birth place	Kinship	Remarks
1	Ai Som	35		—	
2	I Si	32		(IV 7) w ₁ 1, d ₁ IV 1	
3	I Eng	2		d ₁ 1	
4	I Oi	17		w ₃ 1	<i>čait-A</i>
5	I Noi	2 months		d ₂ 1	<i>čait-A</i>

House no. IX Clan: *čait-B* Members: 9

No.	Name	Age	Birth place	Kinship	Remarks
1	Ai Sam	63	Ban Leng	ob XIV 1, XII 1 and XVII 1	specialist in basketry
2	I Si	50		w 1, sister X 1	<i>mpōl</i>
3	Ai Koi	32		s 1	medicine man
4	I Mai	30		w 3, d. XIII 1	<i>čait-A</i>
5	Ai Sam	8		s 3	
6	I Pi	5		d 3	
7	I Yom	3		d 3	
8	I Mai	18		d 1	
9	Ai Ni	21	Ban Noi	h 8 (son-in-law)	

TABLE 5. (cont.)

House no. X		Clan: <i>mpōl</i>		Members: 10	
No.	Name	Age	Birth place	Kinship	Remarks
1	Ai Soi	50	Ban Leng	brother's son XI 1	invalid
2	I Mai	48	Hok Het	w ₁ 1, os XV 8	<i>čait-B</i>
3	I Peui	43	Mokala Luang	w ₂ 1, sister's daughter IX 1	<i>čait-A</i>
4	I Oi †			d ₁ 1	
5	I Ai	18		d ₁ 1	
6	I Si	15		d ₁ 1	
7	Ai Sam	11		s ₁ 1	
8	Ai Kam	8		s ₁ 1	
9	Ai Pi	18		s ₂ 1	
10	Ai Yom	16		s ₁ 1	

House no. XI		Clan: <i>mpōl</i>		Members: 7	
No.	Name	Age	Birth place	Kinship	Remarks
1	Ai Čāt	70	Ban Leng	—	<i>xamiā</i> (priest)
2	I Om	70	Ban Leng	w 1	<i>tavo</i>
3	Ai Soi	30		s 1	
4	I Ui	23	Mokala Luang	w 3	<i>tavo</i>
5	Ai Nga	6		s 3	
6	Ai Hang	3		s 3	
7	New-born			—	

House no. XII		Clan: <i>čait-B</i>		Members: 10	
No.	Name	Age	Birth place	Kinship	Remarks
1	Ai Čang	47	Moksouk	ob XVII 1, yb IX 1 and XIV 1	specialist in basketry
2	I Nang	40	Ban Čeng	w ₁ 1	<i>čait-A</i>
3	I I	30		w ₂ 1, ys XV 2	<i>mpōl</i>
4	I Ui	18		d ₁ 1, w 10	
5	I Ai	16		d ₁ 1	
6	Ai Lui	6		s ₁ 1	
7	I Voi	14		d ₁ 1	
8	Ai Kom	2		s ₁ 1	
9	Ai Kem	3		s ₂ 1	
10	Ai Pi	24	Mokala Luang	h 4, s XV 1	<i>mpōl</i>

TABLE 5. (cont.)

House no. XIII

Clan: *čait-A*

Members: 6

No.	Name	Age	Birth place	Kinship	Remarks
1	Ai Nhi	70	Ban Leng	ob IV 1	specialist in basketry
2	I Peng †			w ₁ 1	
3	I Si	35	Ban Čeng	w ₂ 1	
4	I Pai †			—	
5	I Si †			—	
6	I Ui †			—	
7	I Ei	35	Hok Het	w 10	son's wife, widow
8	I Vāng	14		d 7	
9	I Noi	7		d 7	
10	Ai Kun †			s 1	migrated to Siam, never returned
11	I Mai	17		d 1	

House no. XIV

Clan: *čait-B*

Members: 11

No.	Name	Age	Birth place	Kinship	Remarks
1	Ai Soy	58	Moksouk Luang	ob XII 1 and XVII 1, yb IX 1	medicine man
2	I Vai	54	Hang	w ₁ 1, os XV 2	<i>mpōl</i>
3	I Loi	42		w ₂ 1, d XI 1	<i>mpōl</i>
4	I Yun	35		w ₃ 1, d XV 1, ys IV 3	<i>mpōl</i>
5	I San'	40		ys 1	widow
6	Ai Plo	17		s ₁ 1	
7	I N'i	16		d ₁ 1	
8	I Ui †	9		d 5	
9	I Mai	4		d 5	
10	I Pi	1		d ₃ 1	
11	Ai Čan	6		s 5	
12	Ai Kom	9		s ₁ 1	

TABLE 5. (cont.)

House no. XV

Clan: *mpōl*

Members: 14

No.	Name	Age	Birth place	Kinship	Remarks
1	I Oi	85	Mokala Luang	father's brother's wife 2; widow	<i>čæit</i> ; the oldest person of the village
2	Ai Čan	44		adoptive son XI 1	village chief
3	I San	38		w ₁ 2	<i>lavo</i>
4	I Si	25		w ₂ 2, d XIII 7	<i>čæit</i> -A
5	I Pi	7		d ₁ 2	
6	I Ui	15		d ₁ 2	
7	I Vai	12		d ₁ 2	
8	I Yong	40		older brother's widow 2	<i>čæit</i> -B; remarried to 2 (levirate)
9	Ai Koi	11		s 8	
10	I Si	8		d 8	
11	I Oi	5		d 8	
12	I Ui	20*		d 8	
13	Ai Ling	1/4		s ₂ 2	
14	Ai Soi	2		s ₂ 2	

House no. XVI

Clan: *mpōl*

Members: 6

No.	Name	Age	Birth place	Kinship	Remarks
1	Ai Si	42	Hang	yb X 1	
2	I Pai	40	Hang	w 1	
3	I Ven	20		d 1	
4	Ai Vang	18		s 1	
5	I Noi	17		d 1	
6	I Oi	10		d 1	

House no. XVII

Clan: *čæit*-B

Members: 5

No.	Name	Age	Birth place	Kinship	Remarks
1	Ai Vang	45	Moksouk Luang	yb XII 1, XIV 1 and IX 1	
2	I Pi	42	Hang	w 1, ys XIX 1 and VI 1	<i>čæit</i> -A
3	I Oi	16		d 1	
4	I Seu	10		d 1	
5	Ai Pe	19		h 3, s XXI 1	<i>čæit</i> -A

TABLE 5. (cont)

House no. XVIII

Clan: *mpöl*

Members: 6

No.	Name	Age	Birth place	Kinship	Remarks
1	Ai Kam	36	Mokula Hang	yb XV 2	<i>čait</i>
2	I Lai	35	Ban Toup Luang	w 1	
3	I Vang	15		d 1	
4	I N'l	12		d 1	
5	Ai Vang	9		s 1	
6	Ai Yuan	6		s 1	

House no. XIX

Clan: *čait-B*

Members: 3

No.	Name	Age	Birth place	Kinship	Remarks
1	I Yum	56		os VI 1	married before to a brother of IX 1 <i>čait-A</i>
2	I Noi	47		ys 1	<i>čait-A</i>
3	I Nga	26		d 2	

House no. XX

Clan: *tavə*

Members: 4

No.	Name	Age	Birth place	Kinship	Remarks
1	I Noi	50		ys IX 1 and XIV 1; os XII 1 and XVII 1	<i>čait-B</i> ; widow
2	I Ring	25		d 1	<i>tavə</i>
3	I Pi	23		d 1	<i>tavə</i>
4	I Yum	19		d 1	<i>tavə</i>

House no. XXI

Clan: *čait-A*

Members: 4

No.	Name	Age	Birth place	Kinship	Remarks
1	Ai Vang	64	Moksouk Yeng Preum	—	
2	I Noi	50	Ban Khaling	w 1	
3	I Si	70	Moksouk Yeng Preum	s 1	
4	Ai Vang			adoptive son	



Fig. 42. Lamet mother.

House groups.

As mentioned in the preceding chapter, the extended family is to be regarded as the norm for the house group, that is to say, the ideal for a Lamet is that a house shall be occupied by an extended family. For different reasons this standard is not always reached, and by studying in detail the inhabitants of Mokala Panghay's twenty-one dwellings we could get some idea of the varying composition of the house groups.

In order to get this clear, I mapped the village and catalogued every house, as is seen in table 5. From this I made groupings according to age, which are seen partly in table 6. The number of inhabitants in the village was 141, and 57 of these were men, and 84 women, that is, about 40 % men and 60 % women. I cannot say whether the same decided surplus of women is the rule in other villages, since I have no other notes on the subject. There does not exist any other census of the Lamet other than the number of inhabitants in each village.

Up to ten years the number of men preponderates, but after that there is an immense shifting. In the ages between 11 and 20 years the number of women preponderates enormously. In the ages from 11 to 15 years the relation of men to women is 1 to 3, that is to say, 25 % are men. Between the ages of 16 and 20 years this great divergence diminishes somewhat, and between 21 and 25 years the relation is 1 to 2, that is, one third are men. The cause of this great unevenness is naturally hard to explain, since there is no comparative material to be had that can be said to be exact. In Ban Pouvé, for example, there was only one girl of marriageable age. If I could have got hold of the distribution of population over the whole Lamet district, it is possible that the proportions were more even and more characteristic. A pyramid made up for a single village can often bring to light peculiarities that are only local, and cannot therefore be considered representative for the whole district, making any extensive conclusions impossible. It is in any case evident that in Mokala Panghay an equal number of men and women were born, the number of men somewhat overweighing the other perhaps, but that the death rate among men must be enormous. This impression cannot serve as an exact statement, since I do not know how many men were born ten years ago. Unfortunately I did not draw a pyramid while in the field, and not before coming home, so it did not occur to me to search for reasons for the uneven distribution of population. What I do know is that in 1928 a failure of crops occurred in large portions of North Siam and Indochina,¹⁾ and it is possible that this has contributed in some way. It is peculiar, however, that it is only the number of men that has diminished, and not that of women. In some way the death rate among men has been greater than that of the women.

The greatest number of people exists under 50 years. Beyond this age the number thins out greatly. Only 14 members are over 50 years of age, that is, about 10%. The oldest, a woman, is 85 years old, and the next in order is a man who is 80. The swelling out between 16 and 20 years is most peculiar and impossible to explain. The proportion of men to women is not so extreme as between 11 and 15, but it is the total size of this population group that is remarkable. One person should be excluded here, since it is a married woman who moved in from another village.

The relation of married and unmarried is about equal, that is, about half of the population is married. And there are 28 married men and 42 married women. The relation between men and women among the unmarried is about the same. Only one widower is to be found, while there are

¹⁾ Credner, *op. cit.*, p. 156.

eight widows. This also shows the same relation of men to women, that is to say, the death rate among men is greater than among women. It is difficult to say what this death rate is due to. Possibly it has some connection with the fact that the men are exposed to greater risk in their work in the woods.

As seen in the first column of table 6, the number of inhabitants in each house group varies most between 1 and 14. The houses are not arranged according to number order on the map, but according to the size of the house group. The average is 6.7 members per house, which is unusually high for the Lamet (see table 4). Among the 21 houses, 12 stand under this average, and 9 above it. With the help of tables 5 and 6 we can see how the house groups are made up. We can begin with those standing above the average, and take house no. XV, which has no less than 14 members. This is the family of the village chief, and the housefather himself is 44 years old, a man in his best years, but in spite of the large number of members the family cannot be classed as a complete extended family, with married children and grandchildren. The size of the house group is due to the many children of minor age. In the first place the housefather has two wives, one 38 years old and the other 25. He has three daughters but no son by the first wife. The eldest daughter is 15, and according to what the housefather himself told me, several years passed before he had any children by his first wife. He has two small boys by his second wife, one of them being only a few months old. The older brother of the housefather is dead, and his widow lives in the house with her four children, three daughters and a son. The eldest daughter is 20 years old. The housefather is married to his older brother's widow, and here we find a case of levirate. Besides all these, which are made up of a man with three wives and their children, the oldest person in the village, a woman of 85, lives in the house of the chief. She is not his mother, but is the wife of his uncle on his father's side. The chief lost his parents when he was quite young, and he then lived as an adopted son in house no. XI, that is, his uncle's house. Later on when he left this home and founded a family of his own, he took his uncle's widow along since she had always been "like a mother." This can almost be called a parallel to a levirate although we lack a term for it. It only goes to show that the women of a house group belong to it for life, and that the members of the house group feel that they are obliged to look after the women who have become widows.

The next largest house is no. XIV, which is occupied by the brother-

in-law of the chief, the most prominent medicine man of the village. He is married to the chief's elder sister. Besides her, he has two other wives, that is, three in all, which is the maximum in Mokala Panghay. He has three children by the oldest wife living in the house, two sons and a daughter. The oldest son is 17 years old. He has a daughter one year of age by his wife of third rank, and none of the children by his wife of second rank live at home. Unfortunately I have not noted those who have married outside the village in this table. Besides these three married women, the younger sister of the housefather also lives in the house, and she has three children, one of which, a daughter, died while I was in Mokala Panghay. This woman is a widow and is supported by her brother.

A medicine man lives in house no. VI, and he has two wives. He has five children by the first one, and two by the second. The eldest daughter does not live at home, but is married in house no. I. The eldest son is married and lives in his father's house, but has no children. One of the daughters is newly married, and her husband lives in his father-in-law's house where he is fulfilling the service marriage. In this case we have a type of family which approaches the Lamet's ideal. It is an older family with children in the marriageable age, some of whom are married and remain in the house. The same regards families no. IX and XII.

In house no. IV we find a still older family, which has no less than three married sons who live in the house with their families. The housefather was previously married to a parallel cousin to the priest (*xəmiā*), a woman who had lived in the priest's house, and who in the eyes of the Lamet was looked upon as his sister. Since the *xəmiā* himself did not care to be chief of the village, he turned over the office to his brother-in-law, that is, the housefather in no. IV. This is the man who is usually called Tapia, although his real name was Ai Ćrum. He is one of the most powerful men in the village, and has nearly as much authority as the *xəmiā*. Besides, he is a *lem*, and represents according to my impression the conservative element in Mokala Panghay. The year previous to my arrival in the village he in his turn had turned over the duty of chief to the present chief, to whose parallel cousin he was married. His wife of first rank is dead, and his wife of second rank is the only one living. He has six children by the first, three sons and three daughters. He has had a son by the wife of second rank, who is dead. The three boys are married and live in the house, each with his wife. Only one of them, the eldest, has a child, and he is just preparing to leave the house and found his own household with his family. He has already prepared his own clearing.



Fig. 43. Old lady with leggings. Behind, carrying baskets.

His father is not particularly glad about this, and it is evident that the old man holds his sons under his thumbs, for the younger ones do not dare to oppose him. This is quite obvious on several occasions. They seem to be repressed, and when their father is away they tell me that they do not believe in the old customs which he adheres to strictly. One of them in particular seems to be extremely skeptical. However, they are very well-bred and polite, and the impressions that they are like sons "in old aristocratic families" in Europe will not leave me. The house-father himself, moreover, is a very genial and pleasant man, one of my best informers. He is joking quite a lot, and shows no particular respect for his brother-in-law, the *xəmiā*, whom he irreverently calls *tamək*, a nickname which might be translated as "Old Beard." At first I did not understand that this was a nickname, and while conversing with Ai Koi I happened to use this name in reference to the village priest, which shocked my friend considerably, and was the cause of my getting a lesson in good

manners and respect for my elders. This respect for older people is very typical of the Lamet.

Of the three daughters, one is married and lives in house no. VIII. The two others are as yet unmarried, but one of them, the twenty-year-old one I Vang, has a fiancé and intends to get married. She has cultivated her own clearing in order to have the means for obtaining the equipment she needs for the wedding (see chap. 13).

So far I have only described the houses whose number of inhabitants exceeded the average in Mokala Panghay. Here we have viewed families of various ages, where there are married sons together with their families, and even daughters whose husbands serve their marriage obligations. In table 7 we get a view of the statistical conditions in regard to this. In no less than five houses, married sons with their families are stationed, and in four houses sons-in-law as well. Moreover, we saw a couple of cases where the size of the family had been increased by taking in widows with or without families.

We shall now take a look at the families that lie below the average. Tapia's older brother lives in house no. XIII. He is 70 years old. His wife of first rank is dead, and the case is the same with three of his oldest daughters. Besides, his eldest son has wandered away to Siam and never returned. The people of the village declare that he is dead, but his father believes that he is alive, and speaks constantly about his son, whom he can never forget. However, the son's wife lives in the house with her two children. The housefather has also a daughter of 17, who is as yet unmarried. She is the fiancée of the son of the chief in a neighboring village. The latter often comes on errands to the clearing, and willingly spends the night with the girl of his choice. It is possible that this in the course of time develops into marriage. The housefather is an old man and is looked upon as one of the leading men. He is a *lem*, and had at one time been cheated into buying a title of nobility from the old tax bailiff in the Lu village of Tafá. He seemed to be quite senile, and it was almost pitiable to see his efforts to appear like a man with authority. His wife of second rank, who is alive, rules over the whole household, and she is 35 years younger than her husband, that is to say, as old as the daughter-in-law of the old man. She is a sharp woman, and is still quite handsome. This family is similar in type to those already described, but has diminished considerably through the great number of deaths. In this family the relation of men to women is unusually lop-sided, only one man and five women.

Among the other families below the average there are two kinds, partly young families with only two children or very young ones, and partly families ready to break up, or more correctly, remains of older families.

House no. V belongs to this last group, and only one old man of 80 lives there. He is the oldest male inhabitant of the village. House no. XIX is what is left of an old family. Two widows live here, who are sisters, and one of them has a daughter of 26 who is still unmarried. Thus the whole household consists of women, and the case is the same in house no XX, where also a



Fig. 44. A blind man.

widow lives with three grown-up unmarried daughters. House no. XXI is also what is left of a family, three elderly people, a man and his wife and the housefather's elder sister, and an adopted son. No. VII is a comparatively young family, but here also the housefather is lacking. A widow of 40 lives here with two minor children. She has previously lived in Mokala Luang, but since her husband had no relatives who could take charge of her, she returned to her own village.

House groups I, VIII, XVI, XVII and XVIII form an interesting group of their own, since they consist of families that are comparatively young and continually growing. The inhabitants of these houses vary between five and six in number. In other words, these families are the seeds from which new large house groups will appear, as long as they are allowed to develop normally without misfortune.

House no. I consists of a man and his wife and two small daughters. The husband is 30 and the wife 20, and besides them the housefather's younger sister, who is unmarried, lives there. The parents of the brother and sister are dead, and a married sister to them, who is a widow, lives in the village in house no. VII. The married brother did not feel capable of taking his married sister into his house, but had been in the custom of sharing a clearing with her, that is, they belonged to the same swidden group.

In house No. VIII the housefather is 35 years old, but in spite of his youth he has already acquired two wives and has a child by each of them.

His wife of first rank is a daughter of old Tapía (no. IV), and he has therefore already gone through his service marriage in his father-in-law's house. He still works in the same clearing group as his father-in-law. Ai Som, the housefather in house no. VIII, is a very energetic man and a skillful farmer, which is proved in his exceptional harvest results (p. 288). He has a barn in common with his sister-in-law I Vang, whose clearing lies next to his (chap. 13). It is evident that this man is striving for the future, and aiming to be a *lem*.

The present chief's younger brother lives in house no. XVIII, and he is a likeable and sympathetic man of 36. He has only one wife, and she has borne him two boys and two girls. The oldest child is 15 years old.

In house no. XVI we have a somewhat similar family, although the housefather is somewhat older, 42 years of age. His eldest daughters are already of marriageable age, and the sons likewise. As yet none of them are married, however.

In house no. XVII the case is about the same, and the housefather is 45 years old. Meanwhile he has only two children at home, and a couple are married away from the home. Moreover, one of the daughters is married and lives there with her husband.

Plainly, these last house groups are in a stage of development. One has already acquired a wife of second rank, and another has married daughters and a son-in-law in the house.

From this description of the house groups, we can to some extent trace the coming into existence, the growth, and the decline of the house groups. We see that when a married son gets a child, there is a tendency to form his own household, and he gradually separates from the paternal house. This begins by his making a clearing of his own in order to have the means for founding his own house, and if his harvest is good, he can get the help of the village in building his home if he supplies the working power and food. Tapía's eldest son is this kind of a man, and he is ready to leave the home. The newly founded home grows gradually through the increasing number of children, as we saw in the younger house groups of from five to six inhabitants. The housefathers who can afford it take wives of second rank, and thus the family increases even more. The children grow up and the daughters marry. The sons-in-law work for the family a period of time, and gradually their families move away to return to the house group where they originally belonged. The house group increases through the marriage of the sons, and other additions can be made for its further growth, by means of levirate for example, or by the housefather

taking care of the widows of the nearest relatives and their respective families. At this point the extended families are at the top of their economic production capacity, as I shall demonstrate in chapter 13. Families disintegrate gradually by the marriageable children moving away from the house, and finally only old people remain, provided they do not remain with their children for one reason or another. Meanwhile some families disintegrate through deaths and accidents.

One hardship in the Lamet villages is that of widows and their families. If a woman has become a widow and in spite of the levirate does not become a member of her brother-in-law's family, she often becomes independent and the representative for her own house. It can then be difficult for her to get proper help in the building of her house. In one case, house no. XX, a family of this description did not have a real pile building, but a house of simpler construction placed directly on the ground something like a guard house on the clearings. This must be due to the fact that it is the men that build the house, and therefore the principle of making equal exchanges in working power cannot come into play where the woman cannot afford to pay workers to put up a proper building. In exceptional cases brothers seem to take the families of their sisters into their homes.

In table 7 we can read the relation between the size of the families and the number of partly or entirely biological families which are included in every house group. Among these I have not counted a man's wife of second rank as a family in itself. We can compare this column with the three preceding ones which treat of the number of housefathers' wives, sons' wives, and sons-in-law living in the house who are fulfilling service marriage. The number of biological families will then be equal to the sum of the housefather's own family group and married sons and daughters living at home. Moreover, there appears a case of levirate (house no. XV). As might be expected, all the extended families consist of a number of biological families, with a couple of exceptions.

The size of the house groups or households in other Lamet villages has been arrived at by a division of the number of inhabitants of the village by the number of houses. These figures are set up in tables 2—4, and the discussion of these is taken up in chapter 3, to which I refer. Here I shall remark on one thing, and that is that the average size of the house group in Mokala Panghay is the maximum for the Lamet. This can possibly be due to the fact that this village is more conservative than others, and has been less disturbed by exterior influence. Possibly this can be connected

TABLE 7.

House number	Married		Unmarried		Widows	Householders (number of wives)	Son's wives	Sons-in-law living at home	No. of biological families	Clan	Wives from other villages (than Hang and Lang)	Husbands who have moved in	Remarks
	♂	♀	♂	♀									
V	1	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	1	<i>čait-B</i>			moved in from Mokala Luang
VII	—	1	1	1	—	—	—	—	1	<i>pōš</i>			
III	1	1	1	—	—	1	—	—	1	<i>tav</i>			
XIX	—	2	—	1	—	—	—	—	1	<i>čait-B</i>			all moved in ys (widow), lives in the house
XX	—	1	—	3	1	—	—	—	1	<i>tav</i>			
XXI	1	2	1	—	1	1	—	—	1	<i>čait-A</i>	1 Ban Khaling	1 Moksouk	
I	1	1	—	3	—	1	—	—	1	<i>pōš</i>			1 Moksouk
VIII	1	2	—	2	—	2	—	—	1	<i>čait-B</i>			
XVII	2	2	—	1	—	1	—	1	1	<i>čait-B</i>			
XVIII	1	1	2	2	—	1	—	—	1	<i>čait-B</i>	1 Toup Luang		1 Moksouk
XVI	1	1	1	3	—	1	—	—	1	<i>mṛōl</i>			
XIII	1	2	—	3	1	1	1	—	1	<i>mpōl</i>			
XI	2	2	2	1	—	1	1	—	2	<i>čait-A</i>	1 Ban Čeng, 1 Hok Het		1 Ban Noi
II	1	1	4	1	—	1	—	—	2	<i>mṛōl</i>	1 Mokala Luang		
IX	3	3	1	2	—	1	1	1	1	<i>mṛōl</i>			
X	1	2	4	2	—	2	—	—	1	<i>čait-B</i>			ys (widow), lives in the house widow after older brother (levirate) and father's sister in the house
										<i>mpōl</i>	1 Hok Het, 1 Mokala Luang	1 Ban Noi	
XII	2	3	3	2	—	2	—	1	2	<i>čait-B</i>	1 Ban Čeng	1 Moksouk	
IV	4	4	1	2	—	1	3	—	4	<i>čait-A</i>	1 Moksouk		ys (widow), lives in the house widow after older brother (levirate) and father's sister in the house
VI	3	4	2	2	—	2	1	1	3	<i>čait-A</i>	1 Pangsay	1 Pangsay	
XIV	1	3	3	5	1	3	—	—	1	<i>čait-B</i>		1 Moksouk	
XV	1	4	3	6	2	2	—	—	2	<i>mpōl</i>	1 Mokala Luang		
Total	28	42	29	42	9	24	7	4	32		11	6	

¹⁾ A man with more than one wife is considered as a biological family.

with the fact that the authority of the housefather in Mokala Panghay is unusually great, and that because of this he succeeds in holding his family together. The small house groups below the average means for the Lamet are to be found especially in the northerly villages, where the disintegration of the house groups or extended families has been hastened because of emigration to Siam and the introduction of money. I shall treat of this in chaps. 16—17.

Before leaving table 7 we should make a few more observations. In the column "Wives from other villages" I have included only those that are not born in Mokala Panghay or its predecessors Ban Hang and Ban Lang. In this column we see that eleven women have come from foreign villages. There is a total of 31 wives, and thus it is a rather large percent who are "outsiders". Three of these women come from Mokala Luang, which is the nearest of the villages neighbouring Mokala Panghay. Two women are from Hok Het. This is because one of Mokala Panghay's predecessors, that is to say, one of the older villages, was formerly located near Hok Het, and for a long time there have been marriage ties with this village. The other villages from which women have been taken lie in the neighborhood of Mokala Panghay, and thus we produce from this column a kind of local group, a territory, within which marriage ties occur. Unfortunately there is no accessible map of such detail that these villages could be marked out, otherwise we could certainly find out what definite boundaries this territory has.

In the column "Men who have moved in," we find that one family (XXI) has moved in as a whole, and that the rest are grouped into two categories. One of these consists of sons-in-law who have come from other villages. These live in Mokala Panghay only temporarily and as soon as the service marriage is over they return to their own villages. The second group consists of men from a Khmu village, Moksouk Luang. All of these are from the same family, that is, they are brothers who have married Lamet women.

This influences also the grouping of clans in Mokala Panghay. There are five clans represented there, and among these, six housefathers belong to *écit*-B. Four of these five are brothers and sisters. The others can possibly be related to them, but I have no exact information about their connections of kinship. Four house groups belong to *écit*-A. In two of these the housefathers are brothers. Six families are numbered in the *mpol* clan, and they are all nearly related. These are the chief of the village and his brother and male cousins, who form one generation. Only the



Fig. 45. Leisure.

xəmiā remains of the older generation. Further, there are two families belonging to the *pōs* clan, and the family heads are brother and sister. Finally we have two groups of *tavə* kin. We see here how two large family groups in reality dominate in the village: partly a large *mpōl* kin, and partly a whole crowd of siblings who have been married into the village, and who belong to the *čæit*-B clan.

Mutual relations of the different groups.

We have now reviewed the different forms of association which appear among the Lamet, and I shall also try to describe the mutual relations of the same. First of all I must mention that there are no trade groups, associations, or secret societies of any kind among the Lamet, nor any organized groupings according to age. As I shall point out in several connections, it is the house groups that dominate, and I shall refer to their functions in varied situations in order to sum up the activities of this important group in a general view of the community of the Lamet in the last chapter.

In the chapter about the organization, I treated of the connections between the different age groups, and showed there the great distinction

that exists between those who have children and those who have not. The Lamet can be grouped in the first place according to children who are not fully grown, young unmarried people, and in this group we must include those that are married but have no children. The next group includes married people who have children, and finally, elderly people. As we have observed in this chapter, the biological family breaks out into house groups as soon as a family has children, and thus forms an independent unit or house group. Those who dominate within the house groups are the parents, and above all the housefather, and the others living in the house have nothing to say. The wife of first rank directs the household and all the women of the house. Respect for the elderly is quite marked, and they are often given the title *tā* in the masculine, and *yā* in the feminine, regardless of kinship. As already mentioned, old people have a special class distinction, *kun*. Respect for parents and for older people is almost exaggerated.

There is no initiation ceremony or the like in existence that defines the transition to the age of puberty. A person without children has in the main no power of command. On the other hand, fullgrown boys, even if they are married and lack children, can put in their word in certain meetings. But, as I have already pointed out in the discussion on the community house, the bachelors are entirely incorporated in the economic activity of the house group. Even if the bachelors sleep by themselves at night, they still have no authority. We understand from all this, that the house groups make up the most important units in the community of the Lamet. There exists a kind of hierarchy among them, and those houses where the fathers are *lem* have a good deal to say in the matters that concern the village, and it is they who decide everything of importance. The relations between the house groups and the *lem*, on the one side, and the *xəmiā*, on the other, vary somewhat in each village. The authority of the village priest depends very likely partly on his personality, and partly on his status. If he is a *lem*, he can have a good deal to say and a good deal of power, but if such is not the case, his authority is limited to only his religious functions. Things can even be rather difficult for a *xəmiā* if he does not belong to this class. There exists a kind of tug-of-war between the house groups and their representatives with the *lem* as leaders, on one side, and the general affairs of the village with the *xəmiā* on the other side. As I pointed out previously, the bachelors play no special part in the affairs of the village since they generally are so few, and completely merge in the activity of the house groups. If the Lamet lived in large, thickly populated villages, as is the case with certain Naga tribes,

it is possible that the power of the bachelors might be greater. It is not the relative figures that weigh in the balance, but the absolute ones. Surely a group of twenty bachelors could have some meaning. Besides, if the boys had lived in the community house even before the age of puberty, this group would have been still larger, with little more weight, as is the case among these Naga tribes.

Among the Lower Lamet it is the fathers who pay the bride price for their sons, and the latter then become dependent to quite a degree upon their fathers. Among the Upper Lamet the boys themselves take care of the bride price, and earn the required sum by seeking work in Siam. When they can support themselves in this way, and save a little sum, they acquire a decidedly freer position in the house group, from which they break away when they enter into matrimony. In this way they avoid paternal authority and dependence on their parents-in-law, for whom they would otherwise be forced to perform service marriage, if they could not pay a large enough bride price. Thus the position of the bachelors among the Upper Lamet is decidedly stronger and more free than among the Lower.

There is a certain difference between married persons who as yet have no children, and those of marriageable age but as yet are unmarried, since the unmarried boys must live in the community house, and the girls sleep on a separate berth. But it is difficult to find a suitable expression for this difference. One might say that the unmarried bachelors and women permit themselves to be hired by others, which is seldom the case with those who are married.

We gather from this little analysis that the community of the Lamet can be said to be to a certain degree democratic, if by using this expression we mean that the power is not centralized in one person, for example a chief or the like. It is instead the house groups that dominate, and particularly then the *lem*, who to some degree form the beginning of a social class. In addition, I intend to discuss the relation between various age groups in connection with the division of labour, and refer therefore to chapter 12.

In chapter 4 we saw how a Lamet village can be split up by one or more groups leaving the village and building a new one. Even a single person with his family can leave and thus divide one village into two, as I related about one case in the beginning of this chapter. The usual proceeding seems to be that, since the families in a swidden group are in the habit of sticking together and helping each other, this group forms a unit of this kind. Further, we have seen that families also have a certain tendency to

splitting up into smaller groups. Thus the smallest unit is the biological family, and next is the extended family, then the swidden group, and finally the village. It is possible that clan groups that have intermarried can have some importance, although I did not come across any cases that could give us any real information on this point. The proximity of villages plays its part also to some degree. The tendency to split up that exists among the Lamet appears also among other tribes, for example the Kiwai Papuans and on the island of Borneo.¹⁾

There is evidently a certain rhythm of life for a village. We have seen, however, that its maximum is not dependent on economic-geographic factors, but is connected rather with social conditions. It is difficult to say why a village never becomes so large that it reaches its economic maximum. The only social factor that counteracts this seems to be splitting up, and disputes. It is possible that other causes exist, which limit the growth of the villages. One can then wonder why the people in villages hold together at all. As an answer to this I can only refer to that which Malinowski, Landtman²⁾ and other investigators have suggested, namely the dependence on mutual interests. People need each other for help of various kinds, for example, in building activity, the business of marriage, exchange of wares and services, etc.

In spite of all this it is really rather strange that the Lamet live together in villages, when the swidden group could very well be sufficient as a territorial unit. I have pointed out in the preceding chapters that this group must consist of different clans, and in this connection it is of course suitable for functioning in the exchange through marriage. Judging from what I have already said, it is obvious that the swidden group is the really local unit, and not the village. The swidden group grows up gradually to a village, until it divides up into new villages. We have seen that in Mokala Panghay there are two families that dominate. In the swidden groups the case is similar, since they are often made up of a few families that are related by marriage or belong to the same age group. These families increase later, and then split up into a number of house groups. And thus we arrive at a village similar in type to Mokala Panghay.

It is possible that there are some historical facts that are the basis for the existence of the village as a social unit. Unfortunately I was unable

¹⁾ G. Landtman: The origin of the inequality of the social classes. London, 1938, p. 320.

²⁾ G. Landtman, *op. cit.*; B. Malinowski: Crime and custom in savage society. London, 1926, p. 107.

to investigate this fact, and speculation on the subject is hardly worth while. If we compare the agglomerations of the Lamet with those of the Man and Meo tribes who use swiddens, we find that the latter as a rule have extremely small villages or hamlets of two or three houses. These are obviously swidden groups, and it is probable that these tribes have no inclination to form larger villages. There is a certain distinction between these tribes and the Lamet in that the former do not occupy themselves with the breeding of buffaloes to the extent that the Lamet do. Therefore this difference could perhaps have some meaning, and it is not impossible that at some time in their history the breeding of buffaloes can have been an active factor in the forming of new villages. The kraal-like villages of the Lower Lamet are perhaps to some degree an indication of this. Wars and other events can also have played their part, but unfortunately we know nothing about this, since there are no accounts on the subject.



CHAPTER 7.

The Technical Background

In order to understand the background of the economic life of the Lamet, we must first find out what they have in the way of technical knowledge. Like all other peoples, the Lamet have naturally made a number of observations in the world of nature, and experimented a good deal with all that this plant and animal world has to offer. In order to master the physical surroundings, they have been obliged to procure a lot of different tools, as well as knowledge of technical processes. The tools used by the Lamet, and their technical knowledge are naturally things of tradition for the most, and the same things and similar conceptions are to be met with again among their neighbors. Thus it would be of real interest to find out what the Lamet themselves have discovered in their effort to obtain control of economic processes and their physical surroundings. To do this I would be obliged to make far-reaching comparisons with other tribes in Further India, perhaps the whole of Southeast Asia. It is not my intention here to occupy myself with anything like that, but will save it for a special investigation of their so-called "material culture." Here I shall only make a few general remarks in this connection, and try to present a general survey of the technical background of the Lamet.

There is a rule which says, "One takes what is to hand," and this applies to the Lamet as to others. They have had to learn to make the utmost use of all the resources to be found in their immediate environment. Most of the material needed for tools is fetched from the plant world. In spite of the fact that they have a number of domestic animals, and hunt a good deal, I have never seen them use any material from the animal world except for one thing, and that was the skin on drums. This is rather peculiar, for, as we know, a great many other peoples, Negroes for example, use a lot of animal material. It is true, certainly, that these Negroes are to a great degree raisers of stock, but this is not all that is to be said in the matter. The Lamet also have cattle. It is likely that the explanation lies in the fact that even in the beginning of things people adjust themselves to different kinds of material, which in their turn are connected with the

particular kind of acquiring activity current at the point of time when the adjustment referred to took place.

One of the most vital materials for the Lamet is bamboo, of which there are many different varieties in their district. Thus from thick bamboo different kinds of containers are made. Among these are vessels for fetching water, salt boxes, vessels for holding cooked rice, etc. Even today they cook in bamboo tubes as well in spite of the fact that nowadays the Lamet obtain clay vessels from the Lao, and sometimes even copper pots.

As a matter of fact, bamboo plays the same role for the Lamet as the coco palms for the natives of the South Seas, and certain species of animals for hunting tribes. Bamboo stems are a very fine building material. This is used for flooring and walls and for certain rafters which do not need to be so particularly strong. Split bamboo is used for floors and walls. This is done by taking a somewhat thin-walled variety of bamboo and cutting with a knife through the partitions that lie between the nodes. When this is ready, the nodes can be knocked out with the dull side of the knife, after which a slash along the length of the bamboo tube splits the whole into one piece which can be spread out. It is about the same as cutting up a cylinder of paper so that a flat rectangle is the result. When this plank of bamboo is ready it can be plaited with others for walls, and can be used as planks for flooring. It is almost unbelievable how quickly these bamboo planks can be made. For example, if one intends to sleep out in the woods under a windscreen, one prefers to make a berth in order to avoid sleeping directly on the ground. The Lamet do this in about ten minutes.

Material for plaiting baskets is also obtained from bamboo. A particular kind of bamboo is used for this purpose, which is split into strips of the right size, which again can be spliced into thinner pieces, according to the kind of basket to be made. One has only to set a knife in one end of a bamboo to split it. These strips are then dried on the drying rack in the *cong*.

The Lamet are experts in all kinds of basket weaving, and they have a large number of models for all possible kinds of purposes. The best-made baskets of all, and also the most beautiful, are the *côn*, the large baskets used in the transport of rice.

As a matter of fact, bamboo is used for practically everything. The arc of the crossbow is made of bamboo, and so are the arrows, and spoons, cages of various descriptions, etc. In other words, it is used to a great extent by the Lamet.

The Lamet seldom put together the parts of a house or the like with nails or wooden plugs. Iron nails are of course unknown. Instead, every thing is bound together with strips of fresh bamboo. No knots are made, but the bamboo strip is twisted together by taking the two ends and twisting them until they intertwine. This kind of "knot" is amazingly firm, especially after the strip of bamboo has dried.

Rattan grows in large quantities in the forests of the Lamet, and this is naturally used for the details in a number of tools.

The seats of chairs and stools are made of rattan. Certain details on baskets are also made of rattan or strips of it.

The Lamet are acquainted with a great many varieties of plants from which they get weaving material for various purposes. They are experts in making cord, and above all fine rope. In the making of rope they use a kind of fiber which they get from the inner side of the bark of a tree. This is split up and treated on a special ropemaker's frame. The twining is done by tying the fiber to a little wooden cross and twisting. The ropemaker's frame is not necessarily always used, for it is just as common that a pole is used for the more easily made rope. The rope is fastened to the pole when the twisting is to be done. The various parts of the rope are twisted in this fashion, and then the rope is smoothed by putting it round a pole stuck in the ground, twisting the two ends a bit, and then drawing the rope back and forth from each end until it becomes quite smooth.

Almost every tool derives its material from a particular plant. For the *preiā*, the net bag of the women, a plant is used which must be sought in the valleys along streams. It grows about one and a half meters in height and has yellow flowers. It can be found only in July and August, and at this time the making of these net bags is in full swing. They are netted with special needles by women, who since they are not acquainted with the art of spinning, simply prepare the thread by rolling it on their thighs.

Raincapes are made of pandanus leaves (*laor*), which are dried and sewn together. They are shaped like a roof and placed over the head, so that they protect the rice basket at the same time. When the women are out in the fields weeding, they wear this cape on their backs.

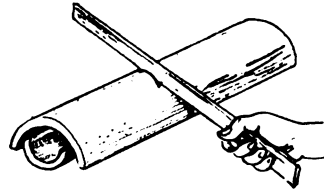


Fig. 46. Fire-sawing.



Fig. 47.
Spade.

Nowadays fire is produced by means of pyrite and steel and a bit of tinder. This is obtained from a special leaf which is allowed to rot until only the ribs remain. Another way of producing it is by means of a kind of silvery wool that grows on the inner side of the leaf-stems of certain palms (*Caryota monostachia*). The old method of producing fire, which is moreover used even today, was to saw with bamboo. Two dry halves of thick bamboo tube are laid one on top of the other (fig. 46). A dent is made in the upper one, and a bamboo rod is used for sawing in this dent. Under the opening in this dent lies the second half tube with a little tinder in the bottom, and when the sawing has gone on for a few minutes, glowing bamboo dust begins to fall on the tinder. When enough has fallen, the bamboo tube is taken up and the embers gently blown upon.

Water containers and cups likewise are made from gourds of the *Lagenaria* species which are cultivated in the swiddens.

The Lamet can neither weave, make clay vessels, nor forge iron tools. All these things form an important part of their import, and are bought from the Thai peoples.

The iron tools bought by the Lamet naturally play a tremendous part in their activities. Both men and women always carry large chopping knives when out at work. These can be looked upon as the universal tool, and they are used for practically everything that a knife can possibly be used for. However, large trees are cut down with the help of a little axe, the blade of which is not more than about 5 cm. in width. A third iron tool is the spade, which is made of an iron piece about 10 cm. wide, which is bent into a half-cylinder. This is fastened to a wooden handle about 1 meter in length. When the Lamet dig with this tool, they take a squatting posture. Evidently it is nothing more to them than a digging-stick provided with an iron tip.

From the examples described in the foregoing we see that the Lamet obtain nearly all their material from the forest. For the most, it is naturally bamboo that is used, since it is so very easy to adapt it to use, and since it can be used in so many different ways. The Lamet are not acquainted with any special machines, and therefore from a technical point of view all their tools are quite primitive. There are only a very few things that are made of metal, and if we took away their iron tools the Lamet would be

living in what might be termed a bamboo age. But perhaps this is not quite correct either, for they would in any case feel the need of sharpened tools. But since the great majority of things are produced from bamboo, there has not been any difficulty in working most of the utensils with tools of stone.

Sharpened stone points have been found in the Lamet district, and the people there believe that these, as well as the rare finds of small bronze axes, are thrown down from the heavens by the spirit of thunder, *phi tuś*.

In the household the Lamet use bowls and mortars of wood, which are hollowed out with iron tools. But I have never seen the large wooden mortars used for stamping rice in the process of being made, and I do not know how this is done.

Like most of the people who live near to nature, the Lamet know a

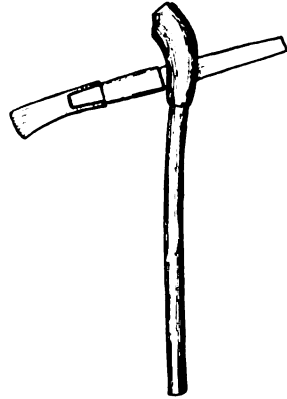


Fig. 48. Lamet ax.

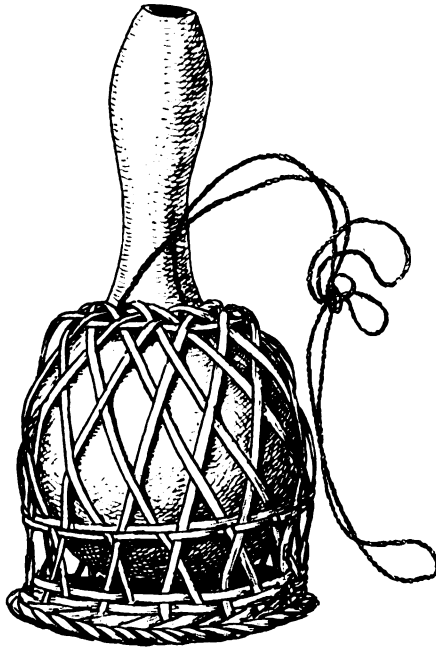


Fig. 49. Water bottle (height 26 cm.).

good deal about many kinds of trees, fruits, and the habits of animals, their knowledge being based on observation and tradition. I shall go deeper into this in another chapter. Here I would like to remark that in regard to some things the Lamet have a decided realistic outlook for facts. They know what the different kinds of earth are suited for, and they know the ways of animals, and what the various plants can yield them.

But sometimes all their experience is not sufficient for mastering the elements, and they reinforce it with magic and religious conceptions. Everything becomes a lottery, where mystical powers are at work, and in order to get control over these, religious and magic rites must be put to use. As soon as a conception of something supernatural takes root in their consciousness, they develop this conception and the rites connected with it into a definite system, and stick to this for fear that they cannot otherwise clear the situation. There is a greater feeling of security in doing as one's ancestors have always done, and for this reason new things are regarded with a certain amount of skepticism in cases where an activity has in one way or another been connected with magic. In their contact with other cultures the Lamet see a great many new things, some of which they learn, but others of which they refuse to accept for various reasons. It is evident that obstacles in the shape of a lot of magical conceptions hinder the accumulating of new technical knowledge. This problem will be treated of in chapter 16.

As we shall see further on, the technical processes of their farming are also extremely simple. Yes, so utterly simple that as a matter of fact they need no other farming tools than a chopping knife, an axe, fire, and a stick with which to make holes in the earth. The agriculture of the Lamet certainly belongs to the most primitive conceivable.

On the other hand, hunting has accumulated a decidedly greater technical knowledge. The Lamet are acquainted with an tremendously large number of traps of various kinds, many of which are quite ingenious. But all of these traps are to be met with again among other tribes in Southeast Asia. There does not seem to be a single one that is particularly original with the Lamet, and in this case the knowledge is obviously common to large parts of southern Asia as well as to some parts of Africa, and must therefore be very ancient and have wandered from tribe to tribe.

I have the impression that the Lamet have in a way specialized in two technical spheres, which they have also developed. One of these is hunting traps, and the other basket weaving. To some extent even skillfulness of a certain kind in the building of houses can be mentioned. Their tech-

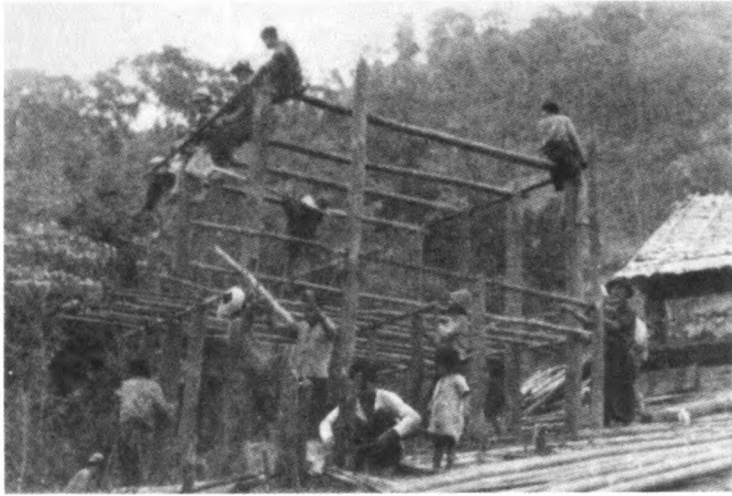


Fig. 50. House building in Pouvé Luong, Upper Lamet. The framework under construction.

nical knowledge has thus followed certain lines, and the discoveries within these spheres have evidently been quite sufficient for satisfying their needs.

It is evident that hunting must have played a decidedly greater role formerly than now. This is especially so if one takes into consideration the fact that at the time when they had not learned of iron tools, the products of agriculture could not have formed so large a part of their food as it does now. If then the need of meat was greater, they must surely have been particularly receptive to all kinds of new knowledge and discoveries in the way of traps.

The Lamet are rather well off during the greater part of the year. Only during the great drought in the months of spring do they complain of having a lack of food. In this connection a new method for helping them over this difficult time would most certainly be acceptable. To be sure, a sufficient amount of rice is on hand, but then they have no variety in their diet, and they do not know of the art of irrigation. They have certainly seen it in use among the Thai tribes, but have never bothered about learning it.

In the way of examples of their technical knowledge and methods of procedure, I shall describe first how they go about building a house, and then how they make a village drum.

During the first days of my stay among the Lamet I was witness to

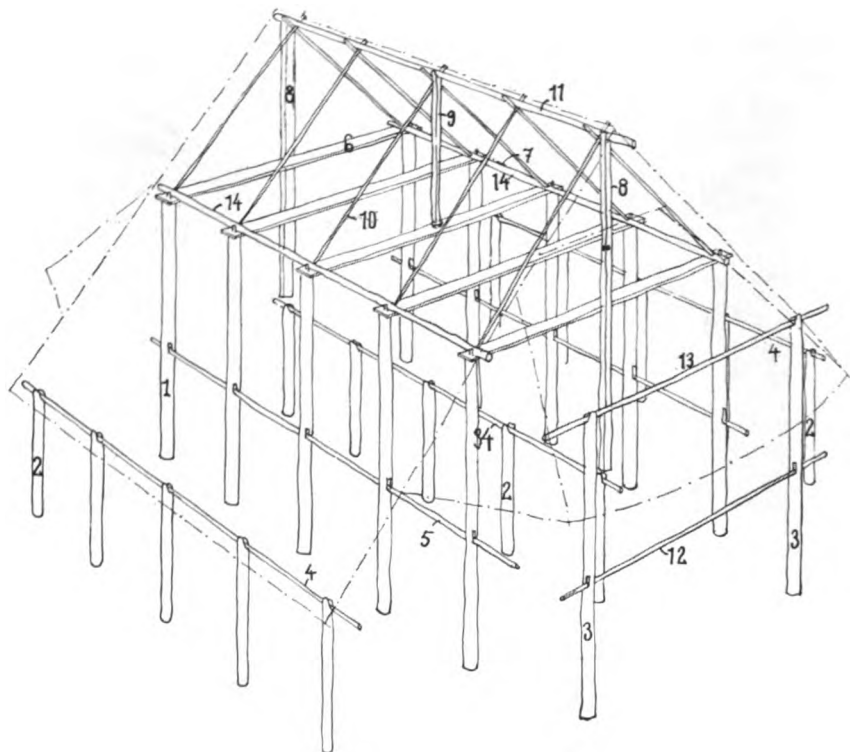


Fig. 51. The framework of the dwelling in Pouvé Luong. The houses are set up as pile buildings, that is to say, the floors are raised above the ground on posts (1), which are driven into the earth. The posts are joined together in pairs by means of tie beams (6) at the top, and the stalls thus formed between them are joined by two plates (7), see figs. 53 and 54 A. Over the framework thus formed the couples are placed, or more correctly the roof construction, consisting of a main ridgepole (11), which is supported by two upright posts (8) and one king post (9) and laterally by the rafters (10), which are placed in the groove in the split bamboo pole 14.

The stability and resistance of the house against wind pressure are attained chiefly by the house posts being driven so deeply into the ground that they can be considered fixed.

the moving of a village. It was the village of Pouvé Luong. When they were ready to move over to the new site, which had previously been a swidden and was therefore already rid of bush, they set about building small temporary constructions. Then followed the moving over of old building material from the village they were leaving. They salvaged the more stable logs and rods from the old houses, if they were at all usable. The rest of the material needed they had to seek in the woods and cut down there.

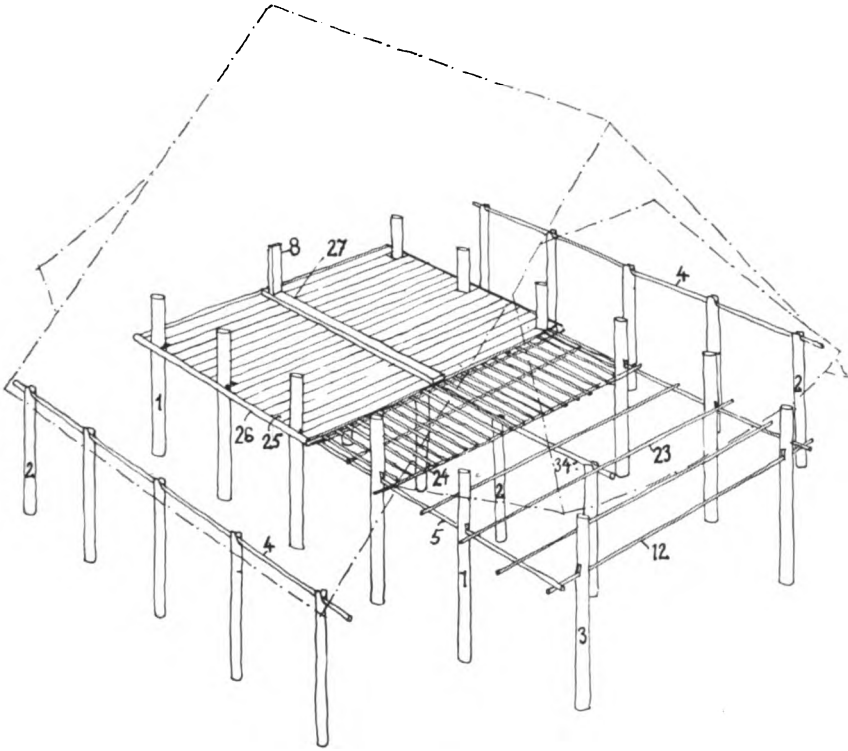


Fig. 52. The floor construction. The floor is supported by piles 1 and 2, on which the rods 5 and 34 rest respectively, which thus form continuous beams. These are in their turn united by transversal beams (23), about one foot apart. Still another layer of bamboo rods is laid on top of this (24), only a few centimeters from each other, and on this finally rests the flooring of bamboo planks (25). These are held down in the middle by the plank 27, on the extremities of which the upright posts (8) rest, and which thus have the additional purpose of carrying the main weight of the roof to the central piles (2). On the outside the floor planks are held together by the bamboo rod 26, which is split and thrust over the ends of the planks.

It is chiefly the men that do the building, but the women help with the chopping. The cutting of poles for the frame is done by only men, however. When all the material needed is chopped down in the forest, it is allowed to lie there until the house is to be erected. In the construction of a house, a man has the help of all in the village, and thus the house can be ready in a single day. Each and every one has his own job to do, and it all goes at a tremendous pace. The site for houses in the village is decided upon by the priest.

When the site is chosen, the housefather measures up the size of the house, and marks out on the ground the places where the poles are to be

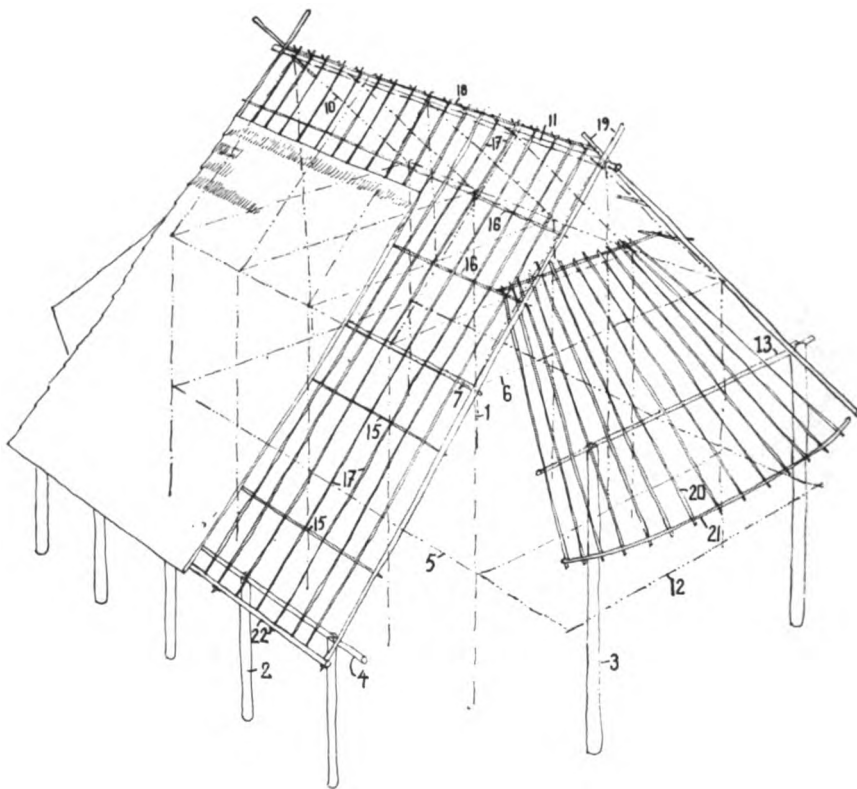


Fig. 53. The roof structure. The roof is supported mainly by the frame, but besides this the drip is propped by the side posts (2) and the plates 4. The long thatch rafters (17) are held by the horizontal purlins (16), the main ridgepole (11) and the plates 7 and 4, and are moreover held together by the purlins 15. The thatch rafters are joined at the top crosswise over the main ridge pole, and in the cross an upper ridgepole (18) is inserted. They are joined and supported at the bottom by the split eaves rod (22) of bamboo, some of them piercing and supporting 22, the others resting in the groove. To the thatch rafters (17) roofing material is fastened in horizontal layers. The roof is finished on the sides by two halves of bamboo tube (19). The roof of the veranda is of similar construction, but at the bottom the thatch rafters (20) are joined to an eaves rod (21) of bamboo by being tied to them. They are supported directly by the plate 13, resting on the piles 3.

driven in. Then the digging of holes for these is begun, and the logs are placed. Earth is shoveled about them and tramped down. Sometimes the digging must be repeated, if the logs have been placed wrongly. To measure a house, a square of long bamboo rods is enclosed according to the size of the roof, and this is marked out on the ground. When the supports have been placed in the ground and properly rectified, which is a very particular matter, the foundation is then complete and the work

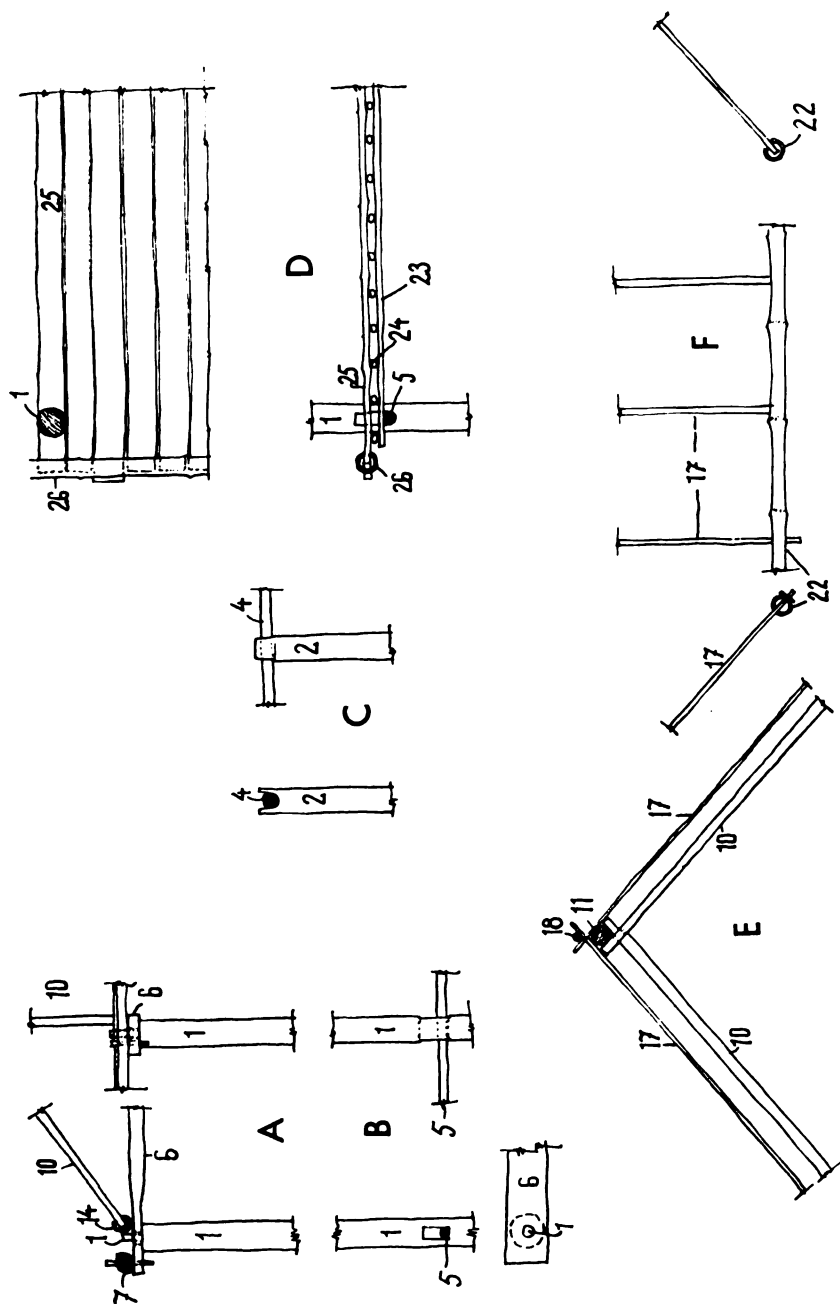


Fig. 54. Structural details. A: Detail of the roof truss. Observe the peg driven through the plate (7) into the tie beam (6). B: The continuous beam 5 supporting the floor is placed in holes made in the posts (1). Below: the tie beam (6) and the post (1) seen from above. C: The plates (4) supporting the drip are placed in notches at the top of the side posts (2). D: A part of the floor seen from above, and — below — the cross section of the same part. E: Front and cross section of the drip. F: Front and cross section of the drip.

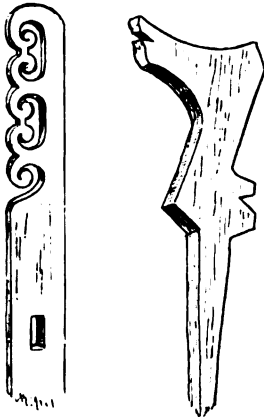


Fig. 55. Part of a house horn from Upper Lamet (to the left) and a peg.

can begin in earnest. The frame is built, and then the floors are put in order. Only the older and more experienced men work on the frame, for this is the most particular job of all. The younger men occupy themselves more with such details as the preparing of floor planks and setting them together, the building of a hearth, of walls, and rods for the roof. All the material, rods and the like, are lashed with strips of bamboo. Every worker on the building carries a little basket, which is fastened to the back side of the belt, and which contains his chopping knife and strips of bamboo. When the framework of the roof is ready, bamboo sticks are laid between the actual rafters. These are intended for use in fastening the roof material. When

this stage is reached the frame of the house is ready. It is only the roof and the walls that are lacking. Before they are fastened, however, a *talā* is hung on one of the poles, and this must remain there for three days. Besides, a smith's pair of tongs of some size is fastened to the *talā*. Their purpose is to seize evil spirits. A Lamet told me that this was very effective, and that there were many of them who had a pair of tongs tattooed on the legs as a protection against the spirit of the water snake.¹⁾ When a house is being built, the Lamet are afraid that evil spirits might come into the village. There are a number of evil spirits out in the woods, for example, those of people who have died of cholera (*phi hā*). When the evil spirits see a *talā* they become afraid and run away. The Lamet also fear that evil spirits are to be found on the site where the new house is being built, and it is in order to hinder these spirits from entering the house that these magic paraphernalia are set up.

While the men have been setting up the framework, the women of the village have spent the whole day out in the woods and gathered leaves for roofing. One after another they come with great loads of leaves, and they get right to work fastening these leaves to bamboo sticks about one and a half meters in length or somewhat over. These "shingles" are then handed to small boys of the village, who have the task of fastening the roof material to the frame of the roof. The boys are light and agile, and are

¹⁾ Possibly *nāga* conception.

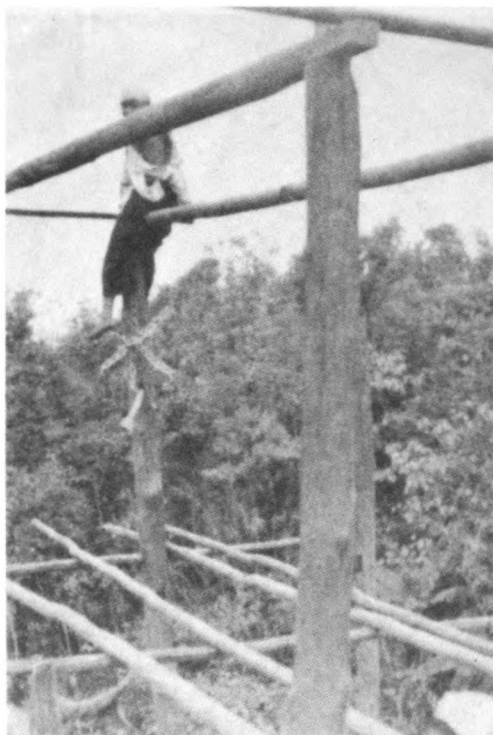


Fig. 56. A *talā* is hung on one of the poles. It is seen below the feet of the man.

suitable for this job. When the roof is completed, the walls are put up and the remaining details of the interior of the house are done.

We see here in the first place a certain division of work, where the important supporting frame is put up by the older and more experienced men. When all the different beams are to be joined together, there is always a technically able man on hand who adjusts the whole. The more inexperienced men have partly the job of dragging the logs to the village, and partly work that is more simple, and for which no great experience is required. The small boys who are lightest in weight and most nimble take care of the fastening of the roofing alone. Thus all the work is done by men except the making of the "shingles." We have observed also that their technical knowledge is dependent on experience, and this is to be found among the older men who have possibly taken part in the building of many houses in the past.

The staff of workers must naturally have a pause now and then in their

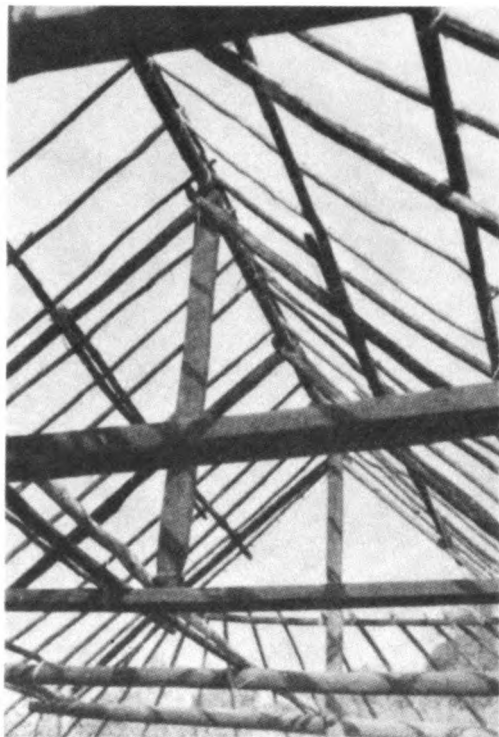


Fig. 57. The roof truss.

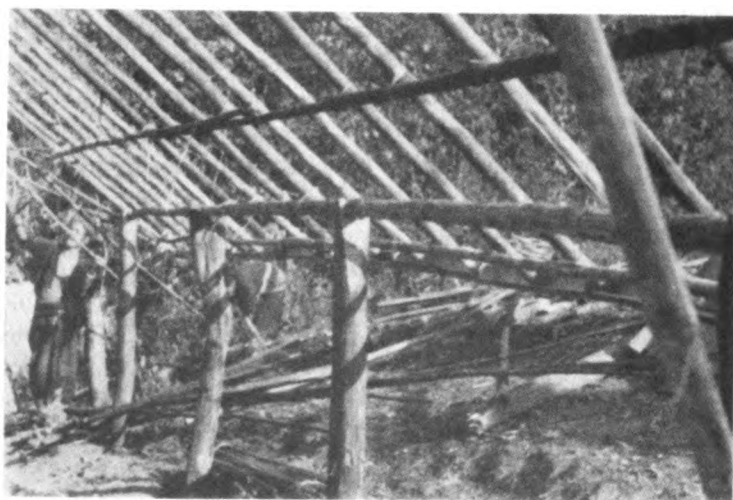


Fig. 58. The drip.

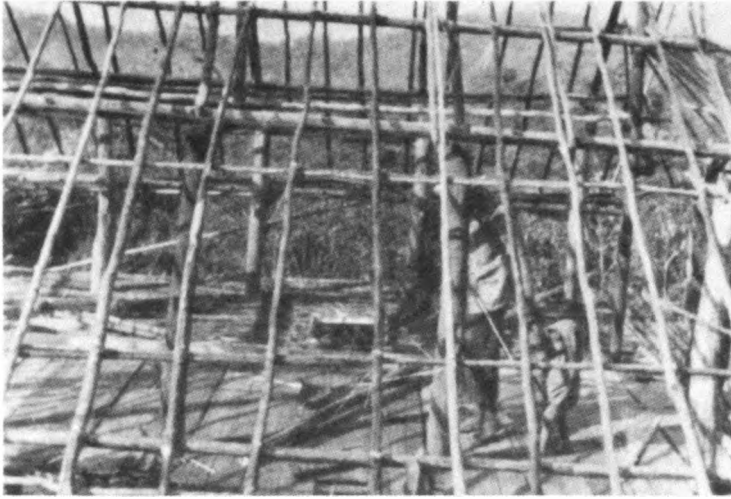


Fig. 59. The floor under construction.

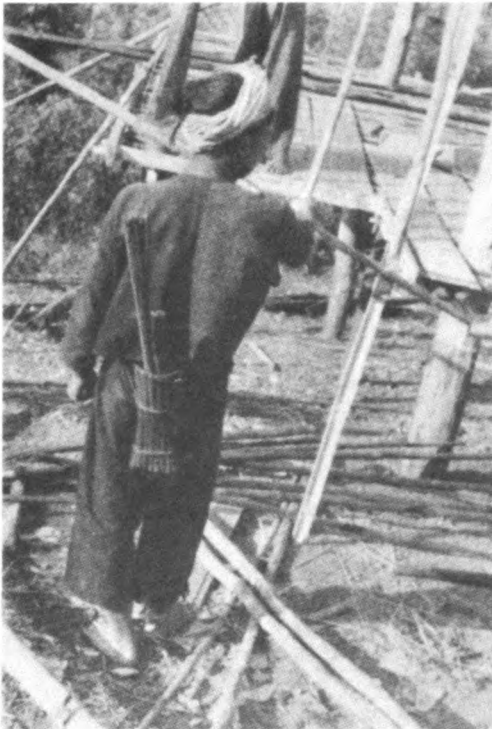


Fig. 60. Measuring. Observe the carpenter basket containing chopping knife and strips of bamboo.

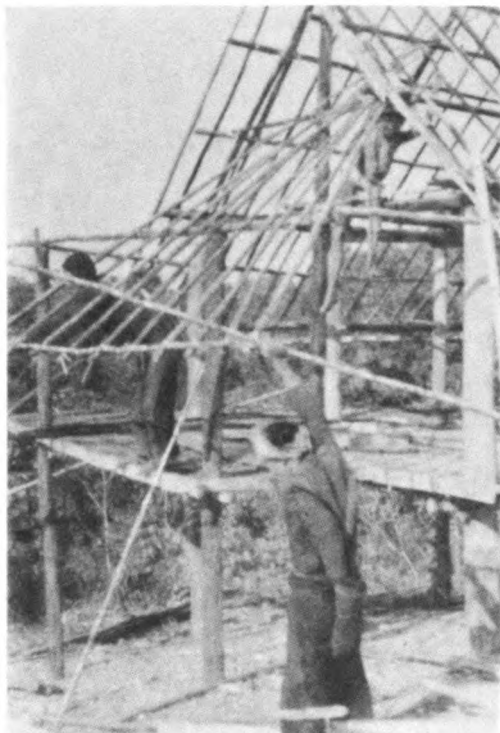


Fig. 61. The veranda roof is made.

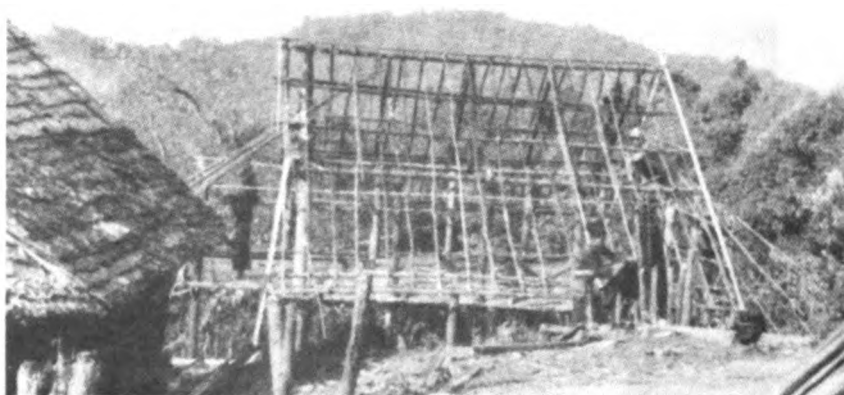


Fig. 62. The work with the roof truss is finished.

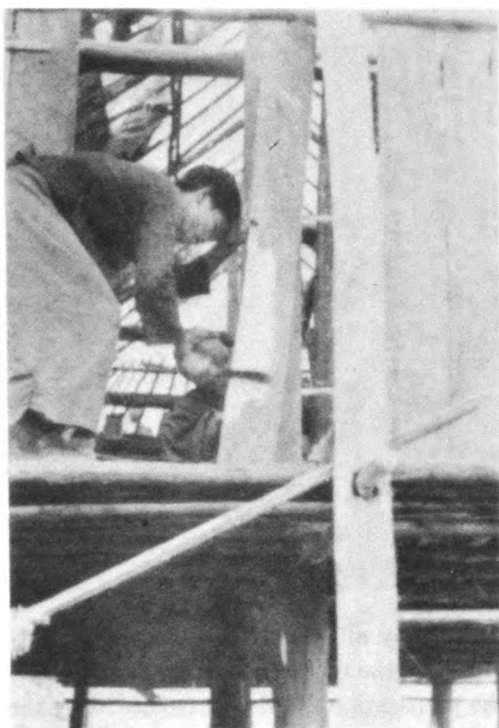


Fig. 63. Work with the doorposts.

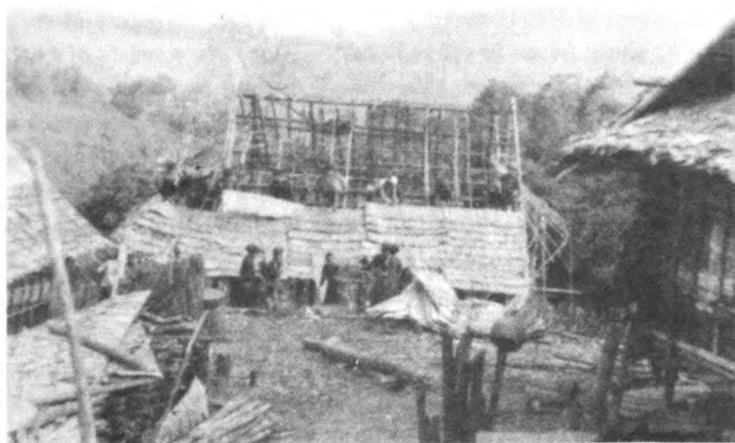


Fig. 64. The "shingling."

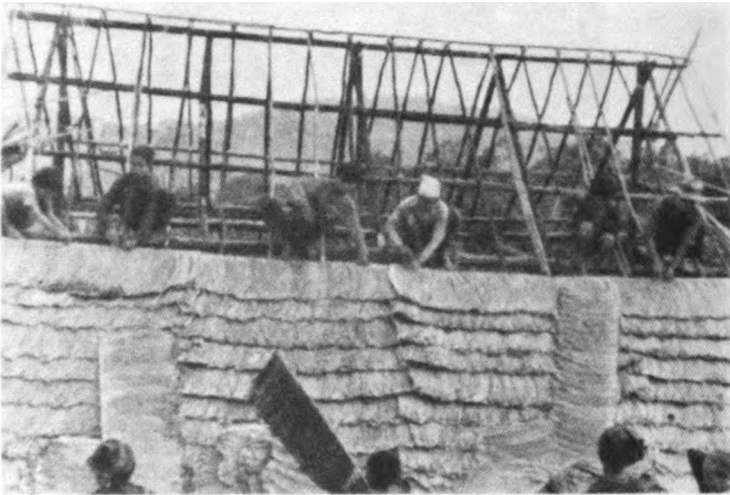


Fig. 65. Women hand over the "shingles" to small boys on the roof.

work for eating, and they all sit together on the ground nearby and eat. The food is provided by the owner of the new house, but a number of the women help in the preparation of all that is needed by the builders.

When the building is completed, a feast for the spirits of the house follows. A little altar is set up, and then the spirits are invited to enter the new dwelling and live at the altar. The population of Pouvé Luong is a mixture of Khmu and Lamet. Their customs therefore diverge somewhat from those of the Lamet. There the altar of ancestors is *not* of the same type as those found in other Lamet villages. It consists of a little box about 60 cm:s square. On one side there is an opening representing a gate, and on the opposite side a hole in the wall is intended for the entrance and exit of the spirits (fig. 66). Rice and bits of betel and alcohol are placed in the box for sacrifice, and I was allowed to contribute some silver coins. The spirits were called forth by a medicine man, who stood in the door opening that faced the old village. He did not sing in Lamet nor in the Khmu language, but in Yuan, when he summoned the spirits. His eyes were glassy and it was evident that he had gone into a trance. The men who partook in the festivities told me that a spirit had entered his body. Later on he went up to the

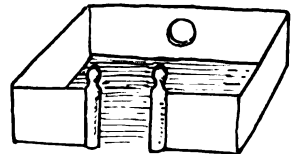


Fig. 66. Ancestor shrine in Pouvé Luong.



Fig. 67. The soaked drumskin is beaten.

altar and examined it, rectified a detail here and there, and sacrificed a little rice and alcohol. The men stepped forth one by one and contributed small gifts of sacrifice. When this ceremony was over, and the spirits of the house had taken up their abode, the feast was begun. The medicine man became normal again and behaved like a normal human being. All night long the eating, and above all, the drinking continued, for when the Lamet once begin to partake of liquor, there is no end until the whole supply is finished. Some of the bravest fellows in fact continued for three days and nights. Now and again the feasting was broken off with a sword dance. In this two men dance opposite each other, both holding two drawn swords. The procedure resembles sham fencing, and the dance follows the rhythm of drums and cymbals. All want to show their ability as dancers, and they often continue all night long. The sword dance is to be seen among the Lu also, and very likely among the Yuan, and seems to be especially common in Burma. The Lamet have most certainly learned this dance from the Burmans. It is possible that it is connected with similar war dances in China.

In Ban Xang I witnessed the making of a drum, or more correctly, the stretching of the drumskin. The frame itself had been carved out of wood



Fig. 68. A band of cane for the drumhead is plaited.

by a young man who declared he was the only one in the village who could do this. He was also the owner of the drum. This work he had done quite independently, but he was obliged to have help in the stretching of the skin. It was chiefly young boys who helped him with this, but he himself directed the work, in his turn getting the advice of an older man who was responsible for the sacrifice ceremonies that are offered to the spirit of the drum. In the process of stretching, the drum was set up vertically and the skin laid over the opening at the top. On the edges of the skin, holes were made and ropes fastened in these, and later the ropes were tied to logs and stumps on the ground. Before the skin was laid on, it had been soaked a long time in water, and was thoroughly drenched. Then they began to beat on the stretched skin with all their might in order to stretch it to its fullest capacity. Now and again water was poured on it, and they set up the beating again. As soon as it became obvious that the skin could be stretched farther, they expanded it by tightening the ropes. They continued with this work a whole morning. When the two skins were finally stretched to the satisfaction of all, they were plugged into the edge of the body of the drum with coarse wooden plugs, and the surplus skin was cut away. A band of plaited cane was then placed around the



Fig. 69. The stretching is finished.

edge of the drum to reinforce the plugs, whereupon the tops of the latter were cut off. After this the old man offered a sacrifice to the spirit of the drum. This was put in a bowl on one of the drumheads, and then the drum was placed in the sun in order to dry. It is a known fact of course, that rawhide shrinks quite decidedly when it dries, and becomes quite hard, and therefore the drumskin becomes very tight and the drum resounds well.

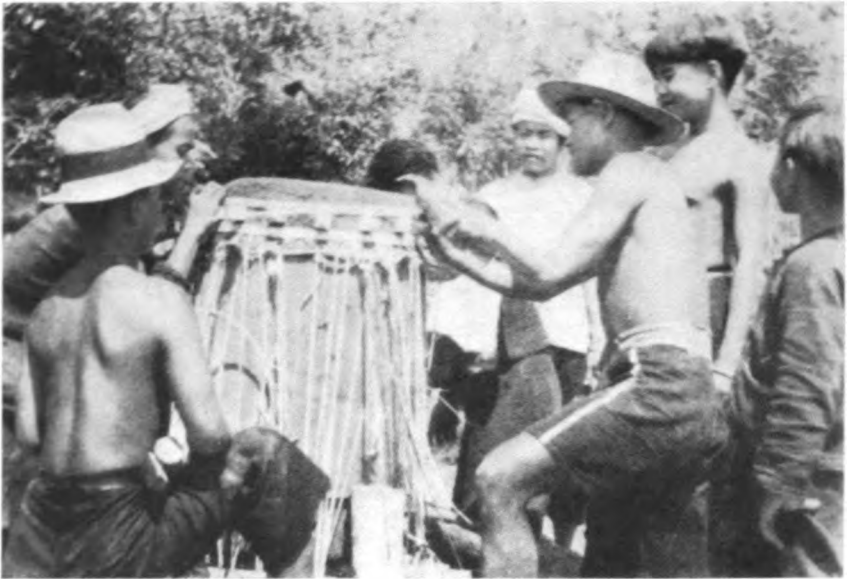


Fig. 70. The skin is fastened with plugs.



Fig. 71. Sacrifice to the spirit of the drum.

CHAPTER 8.

The Annual Cycle of Labour

The division of the life of the Lamet into sections of the year is due to several factors. First of all the rhythmical variation of the climate plays the dominant role. It is a typical monsoon climate, with a rainy period between June and October, and then a dry period for the rest of the year. Three periods of the year can be distinguished: the cold, the warm and the rainy period. The Lamet themselves divide up the year in this way, and call these divisions *yam kat* (the cold period), *yam pok* (the warm period), and *yam selāh* (the rainy period).

The cold period comes in November and continues until the beginning of March, when it is succeeded by the hottest time of the year. During this time it is still dry, so dry that many of the small mountain streams dry up and the water in the wells disappears. The transition to the rainy period takes place gradually. Not until July and August does it rain continually.

The cultivation of rice and all other agrarian activities take place in the rainy season. In January the clearing of the forest for new fields is begun, and this work of chopping trees and bush goes on until the middle of March, when the cut-down forest sections are burned. During the warm season there is no work to be done on the swiddens, so the Lamet occupy themselves at this time with the making of tools, the repairing of houses, and similar jobs in the villages. When the first rains come, they go out and begin the sowing, and thus the farming itself begins. During the rainy season the swiddens are guarded, and the women wander all day in the forest, seeking edible plants, while the men occupy themselves with hunting and fishing. In the middle of September the harvest begins, and continues up to the month of January.

The cultivation of rice assumes the most important place in the working life of the Lamet, just as rice is the basis of their food. Since the cultivation of rice is above all dependent on the change of climate, it can be said that the Lamet are to a great degree dependent on their physical surroundings in their work. Their other activities are also connected with the climate

and are adjusted to it, as for example hunting and fishing. The same regards the making of a great many tools, since the material for these is not accessible at all times of the year, but perhaps only during certain seasons. However, the cultivation of rice dominates everything else, and all other activity must be taken up as the opportunity presents itself during unoccupied time, except for the routine of daily life, which I shall give an account of further on.

In a way the greater feasts partaken of by all in the village form milestones. This is especially so in regard to the festivals for the spirits of the village. The first of these is held a few days before sowing takes place, that is, when the first rains have come, and the second occurs when the rice has reached a height of about 20 cm. With the celebrating of the second festival, community life undergoes a change, by the greater part of activity taking place out on the swiddens. Among the Lower Lamet, moreover, whole families move out and live there as long as the farming continues. Since these festivals are connected with agriculture, they are only a secondary factor in dividing up the rhythm of their life during the year.

There is yet another factor which plays a part in dividing up the year, and that is the calendar system of the Lamet, which I shall describe a little further on.

In order to get a view over the production life of the Lamet, I have made up the following table. At the same time I have made a summary in the opposite column of access to food which is to be had during the various periods. I shall go deeper into this column in a later chapter.

Production:

Supply:

January:

During this month the rice harvest is completed, and sacrifice is made to the soul of rice. The Lamet move away from the clearings back to the village. Traps for birds are laid out on the clearings, and doves in particular are captured. The cutting of new clearings is begun.

Abundant supply of all kinds of food-stuff, not only rice but other products from the clearing as well. Wild plants are of no importance during this time except for a kind of wild pumpkin.

February:

Clearing continues. Rice is sold in the Thai villages, and iron tools and other things are bought.

Root products from the swiddens begin to come to an end. Egg-plant is still to be had. Otherwise things are the same as in the preceding month.

*The warm season:**March:*

In the middle of this month the burning of the swiddens is begun. Wild edible plants are not to be had, and hunting brings no results since all game has vanished deep in the forests. Houses are repaired and tools made.

The most difficult time of all begins now. Due to the drought, there are no wild plants to be picked, and thus vegetables are scarce. Animals disappear far into the forests, and the result is that there is nothing to eat except rice and dried meat. The streams have nearly run dry, and fish is to be found in small pools.

April:

Burning continues. At the end of the month a few showers fall and some of the early varieties of rice can be sown, also a few other plants. But on the whole the drought is the same as in the preceding month.

The same difficulties as in the preceding month.

May:

A festival is held for the spirit of the village. Sowing is in full swing during the whole month. Sometimes a few plants that have run wild in old swiddens can be used. At the end of the month the first bamboo shoots are to be seen.

The supply of wild plants begins to increase somewhat. Bamboo shoots in particular. Hunting and fishing are still poor.

*The rainy season:**June:*

Among the Lower Lamet most of the families have moved out on the swiddens. Among the Upper Lamet people go there only during the day. They begin to clear away the worst of the weeds. The gathering of wild plants plays an important part during this month. The women are in the woods daily, seeking bamboo shoots, rattan shoots, and other wild edible plants. Fishing as well as hunting gradually gets started.

The supply of food is once more plentiful, and rice, which is reduced more and more, is supplanted with wild plants, especially bamboo shoots. The supply of meat from wild animals is also greater. Some fruits, like the mango, are now ripe.

July:

Weeding of the swiddens continues. The same in regard to the gathering of wild plants. In about the middle of the month the second festival for the spirits of the village takes place. Hunting continues normally, and fishing gives better results. Some of the vegetables raised can now be used, for example, corn and certain root products like manioc, cucumbers, taro, and sweet potatoes.

The rice begins to dwindle, and both wild and cultivated vegetables supplant it more and more. The supply of meat from hunted animals is rather plentiful, and the case is the same with the small amount of fish which the Lamet catch.

August:

The gathering of wild plants continues, and a lot of time is spent hunting.

The supply of various kinds of fruit, such as the guava, and also a great many cultivated as well as wild plants, is now very plentiful. In some families there is hardly any rice left. Wild game caught in the traps is brought into the village daily.

September:

At the end of this month the earliest variety of rice is ripe, and the harvest can take place after the proper ceremonies. Hunting and the gathering of wild plants continues, however, along with farming.

The supply of all kinds of plants is now plentiful, especially that of cucumbers. As soon as the harvest has begun, the food supply is more than enough. Rice is not eaten to the same extent now, for there are plenty of other plants on hand.

*The cold season:**October:*

The harvest is now in full swing and in all Lamet villages most of the families have left their homes and taken up their abode on the swiddens. All kinds of cultivated plants are now ripe, and in the gardens around the villages there is a lot of citrus fruit of all kinds. Hunting is still yielding.

The best time of the year has now arrived for the Lamet, when all kinds of food can be had in great quantities. Their diet is more varied now, and all kinds of vegetables are eaten, especially those that are cultivated, such as cucumbers, onions, all kinds of herbs, taro, yams, sweet potatoes, manioc, peanuts, etc. A great many animals are caught in the traps placed near the swiddens.

November:

The same as in the preceding month.

The same as in the preceding month.

December:

The harvest is now ready in most cases, but in a few villages it is not ready until the beginning of January. All their time is devoted to the harvest, and moreover red pepper and tobacco are dried and packed in specially made baskets. At the end of the month when all the rice has been harvested, the transportation of the products to the barns is begun. This at least regards the Lower Lamet. There is no time for hunting or fishing or gathering.

The same as in the preceding month.

It can be seen from this table that the Lamet have a very regular, seasonal, rhythm for their activities during the year. Another observation to be made is that the most difficult period, when access to food is at its worst, comes during the warm season just after the burning of the swiddens. Among the Lamet this period occurs at the same time that they have least to do. This is rather remarkable, since it often happens among other peoples that the lack of food is greatest when there is most work to be done.¹⁾ The Lamet use this time for doing the work that is needed within the village. While they were occupied with clearing forest sections for the new swiddens, they took the opportunity of laying up valuable timber and such material as can be used in building. When the swiddens are burned and ready, there is time for building new houses, even for building new villages, and also for doing handwork like weaving baskets, etc. Thus we see that it is chiefly the climate that decides the rhythm of the life of labour, and that this follows a certain routine. Thus the Lamet have not been able to free themselves from the climatic bonds, but have had to adjust themselves to them. The case is the same with other tribes in Further India who have a similar technique of production.

In order to get an idea of the position of the Lamet in regard to the other cultures within the district that is ruled by the monsoon climate, it might be interesting to make a little comparison with the peoples who

¹⁾ Melville J. Herskovits: *The economic life of primitive peoples*. New York and London, 1940, p. 252.

carry on agriculture by means of irrigation. In such a comparison quite a difference is to be found in the fact that the latter have succeeded more or less in breaking through the limits set down by the climate for agriculture. Perhaps this does not concern the Thai peoples, since they are dependent on the rainy season in spite of their irrigation. Their actual cultivation of rice and the watering by means of gravity connected with it can only take place during the rainy season when the streams and rivers are filled with water. However, they have even succeeded with smaller fields during the dry period. These are located on the damp shores of the rivers. They are watered quite often by means of the automatic functioning of the so-called *norias*, a kind of water wheel, which is driven by the current, simultaneously pumping water to a height equal to the diameter of the wheel. Besides, the somewhat damp shores, which are inundated during the rainy season, are particularly fertile, since a great quantity of silt has settled there during the rainy period. In this way the Thai peoples have fresh garden products even during the summer.

On the great valley plains surrounding the rivers, and in the delta districts on the coasts of Further India, what is called elevation irrigation is used. By means of this the climatic limits have been broken down, and two harvests a year are obtained regularly, and in some places even three. Besides, constant farming fields have been produced by means of irrigation, and these are manured by all the nourishing salts left there by the silt of the river, and here again mastery over nature has been obtained.

Compared with these systems, the agriculture of the Lamet is seen in another light. However, it can be said that the Lamet's system functions rather well during most of the year, for it is only during the hottest time that they have difficulty in obtaining food. The Lamet themselves declare that this period is the worst of all, but they have never been able to master the ever-returning situation. There is rice always on hand, but the supply of other foods is remarkably poor. Strangely enough they have never tried raising vegetables down in the valleys. This can be due, however, to their constant fear of dangerous spirits, which are considered to be the cause of fevers. The danger of malaria is greater too, down in the valleys, than on the mountain tops. In the crevices of the mountains, where the streams flow, the Lamet raise tea, to be sure, but they have never thought of laying out small gardens for vegetables in these places. However, it is also possible that they know of no suitable vegetable that can withstand the lack of water during the great drought.

To some degree the seasons influence the organization of the community as well. I have already asserted that the year is divided into two halves, the cultivation period during the time of rain, on one side, and the dry period on the other. As soon as the second festival for the village spirits is over, the moving away from the village begins in earnest, and the village is nearly deserted, with only a few elderly people and young children remaining, that is, those unfit for work. This concerns only the Lower Lamet, however, for the Upper Lamet live in the villages the whole time. With an exodus of this kind, the whole village becomes broken up and divided into swidden groups, each of which lives its own life. Not until the harvest is taken in do people gather in the villages again, and in this way the village as an organization becomes a unit again. It is during this time that people are dependent on each other's help in building houses and the like, and this is one of the factors which in all probability form the basis of the organization of the village.

The calendar of the Lamet.

The Lamet have a calendar system that is made up of a combination of ten and twelve days. These run together in a sixty-day-cycle, that is to say, five "weeks" of 12 days and six of 10 days make up such a cycle. The Lamet have learned this system from the Yuan, and originally it is supposed to have been Chinese. In China also a combination of 10 and 12 is used in counting the Chinese cycles: the 12 "branches" and the 10 "heavenly stems."

Only a few Lamet are acquainted with this system. First of all the priest, and then the medicine men. It is used for calculating the lucky and unlucky days. If there is some important undertaking on hand, a good day is sought out for it.

The names of the days are as follows:

1. *tau sī*
2. *kā séuh*
3. *kap sígā*
4. *rap mət*
5. *rvai sən*
6. *muɣ rau*
7. *pluk sət*
8. *kat kũh*
9. *kut tōh*

10. *rung plau*
11. *tau n'ih*
12. *kā mau*
13. *kap sī*
14. *rap seuh*
- etc.

Certain days are considered to be particularly good ones. They are those that are coupled with *kā* and *pluk*. There are other days when work is forbidden. These are called *syi sekē*, which means forbidden day. Among these days certain combinations of the first three days in the 12-series are to be found. On these days work on the swiddens is forbidden, and rice is not allowed to be winnowed. Festivals and the like are dated for the good days.

CHAPTER 9.

Gathering of Wild Plants, Fishing and Hunting

Gathering of Wild Plants

At certain times of the year wild edible plants play an important part in the Lamet's diet. This is especially the case during the rainy season, when shoots of all kinds break through the earth, and everything comes to life again. During the warm spring months which precede the monsoon rains, the wealth of the forest vanishes. When the rains come there are bamboo shoots in enormous quantities all the time, and this food is then an important addition in the diet of the Lamet, since it is at just this time that the supply of rice in the barns begins to diminish noticeably.

It is the women's job to go out in the woods and look for wild edible plants, and in the beginning of the rainy season one often comes across small groups of women in the woods, where they are seeking these edible things. They seek the shoots of all kinds of plants with the help of their chopping knives, and dig up the roots with a little iron shovel or a stick chopped out of hardwood. The supply they can gather is then carried home in a kind of net bag (*preiā*). The latter are made by the women themselves, and are netted with a special netting needle. These bags are to be found in all sizes, from small ones that are carried over the shoulder, to large ones that the women support with a headband.

The first bamboo shoots are small and thin like asparagus, and their taste is bitter. Later on better kinds are to be had, and have the appearance of heavy shoots half a meter in length, with a base from six to eight cm. in diameter. These form a vital part of the vegetarian diet during the rainy season, while the cultivated plants have not yet ripened.

Shoots of other plants also are used, especially those of rattan, of which there is plenty to be found in the Lamet district. Rattan shoots are cooked together with dried meat and red pepper in a soup, and they give it a somewhat sour taste. It is very much liked by the Lamet, and I myself can certify that it is excellent.

As I have already said, the Lamet have an extensive knowledge of the use of wild plants. The strange thing about it is that I have never seen them use any of these as medicine. Unfortunately I am not sufficiently acquainted with botany in order to say which varieties they use. However, I have tasted most of those that I have seen them eat. The stem of a marsh plant resembling *Colocasia* is cooked for eating. The roots of plants resembling ginger are also used. What I thought was strange was that the Lamet do not pick cardamom, in spite of the fact that it grows wild in their mountains. It would certainly give them a good income on the side. One tribe, the Kha Bit, living somewhat north of the Lamet district, earn quite a bit of money by gathering this.

A number of various fruits from different trees are eaten raw. They often have a very sour taste. There is a kind of large nut that is considered to be a great delicacy, and is said to come from a species of liana. However, it must be roasted before it can be eaten, otherwise one can get a terrible headache, the Lamet tell me. The kernel of the nut is about 15 cm. in diameter, and when roasted it tastes like a Brazil nut.

Wild pumpkins are gathered in the fall and are eaten cooked. A kind of leaf bud which grows on the point of the banana's fruit flower, plays an important part in salad dishes.

I have not observed any religious or magic activities in connection with wild plants.

I once asked some Lamet people if they could possibly exist without the aid of agriculture, living only on the products obtained from hunting, fishing, and the gathering of wild plants. They answered that it would be very difficult, but they could get along for the greater part of the year. The spring months, however, would be difficult, and most of the people would surely starve at that time. In that case the women would have to go and seek wild plants constantly, and wander in the woods all day, while the men would have to continue day and night with their hunting and fishing. Not until the rainy season could living become tolerable. Then there would be plenty of everything.

Fishing

Fishing is carried on to only a limited extent, and this for easily explained reasons. The Lamet are mountain dwellers and do not like to go down in the valleys, since it is their belief that evil spirits exist there. For this reason they never stay there any length of time, taking advantage of

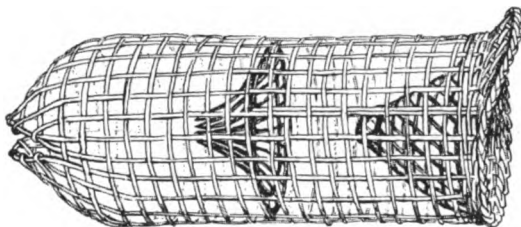
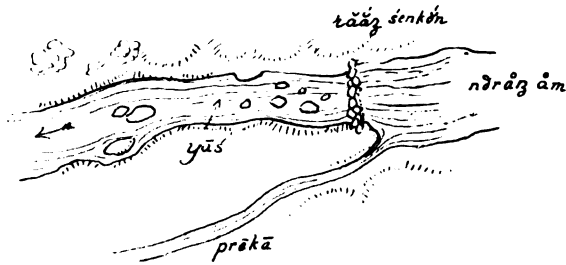


Fig. 72. A creel with two obstacles. Length 25 cm. Creels with one obstacle occur more frequently.

the wealth of fish to be found in the large rivers. There are only streams and small rivers up in the mountains. Many of these dry up almost entirely during the warm season, and only a few pools remain. When food is scarce at this time, the Lamet often empty these pools with a little scoop (*nrāt*) made of the outer layer of a banana stem. Only when the rains come and the watercourses are once more filled, is it worth while trying to fish. Fish are caught with small creels made of bamboo. Naturally it is only small fish that can be caught in this way, since the creels are seldom more than 25 cm. in length. Fishing is carried on only by men.

The creels are set out in suitable places, and preferably the streams are dammed up with stones, and the creels placed in the openings between the stones. Since the rivers are not overfull, a stone wall is sometimes built right across them, and sometimes a dam is built up (fig. 73). The spaces between the stones are then filled up with clay and twigs. A stone wall of this description is called *raag senkon*. A canal (*prēkā*) is then dug leading away from this wall, for the purpose of conducting the water elsewhere. The Lamet then fish in the part lying below the dam (*yās*). Here, however, they do not use creels, but hoop-nets, since the water is shallow. Castnets, which are so common among the Thai peoples in the neighborhood of the Lamet, are not used by the Lamet themselves, but on the other hand, the Lamet can be seen using large creels a couple of meters in length in the larger rivers. They have learned this from the Lu in Tafá. I have seen these only a very few times. Fishing with spears, javelins, or arrows never occurs.

Hoop-nets for fishing consist of a wavy, bent piece of wood and a net. The handle is of bamboo. These are called *vig kā*. Another type is *mbiau*, which is made of a bit of wood bent in the shape of a ring. The handle is made in one piece with the ring.

Fig. 73. Plan of a *yā*.

Quite another type of fishing net is that called *kedæ* (fig. 74). It consists of a wooden shaft in the shape of a tube, in which four thin flexible sticks are inserted. A square net is stretched over the tops of the sticks. When the fish are caught, the net falls together in the shape of a cornet, and the elastic sticks give way. Small sliders have been placed in the corners of the net, whose function is to hold apart the threads that fasten the net to the sticks. This net is used in fishing by being placed under the fish, or by being placed over the fish in shallow water. The implement is very refined and practical. Besides, it is collapsible. When not in use, the sticks are taken out of the shaft and placed in the inner hole of the shaft. Fastened together in this way, the implement is easy to take along with one's packing. This *kedæ* is used much more than the other nets, and is seen everywhere in Lamet villages, which is not the case with the other types.

In the example shown here, the length of the sticks is 72 cm. and the edge of the net is 54 cm. This is the usual size.¹⁾

Fishing with poison is spoken of in a number of villages. However, I have never come across a case of this kind. Certain leaves are used as poison.

It is always men who do the fishing, and likewise they who make the nets.

The fish are carried home in special fish baskets of the type shown in fig. 119. The fish that are not eaten right away are smoked and dried in the same way as meat. But as a rule the quantities obtained are so small that

¹⁾ Fishing implements resembling *kedæ* are to be found among a number of different tribes, like the Akha, Thai, Yuan and the Annamese. It assumes enormous proportions among the two latter peoples.

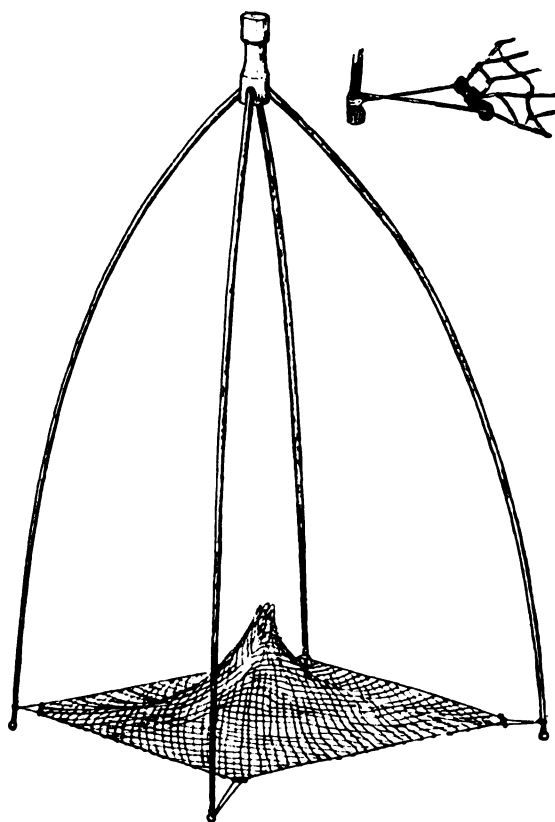


Fig. 74. Fishing net of the type *kedæ*.

it is not worth while preserving the fish. The Lamet do not allow the fish to ferment as is the custom among the Annamese and the Thai. All fish is roasted in a simple way, by squeezing it into a split piece of bamboo and holding them over the coals.

The Lamet have no boats for the purpose of fishing nor for any other purpose, although they relate in an old story that they once upon a time had boats made of skin. This is supposed to have been so long ago, however, that no one remembers what they looked like.

On the other hand, the Lamet know the art of making bamboo rafts, which they use in following the larger watercourses, where they have not access to canoes obtained from the Thai.

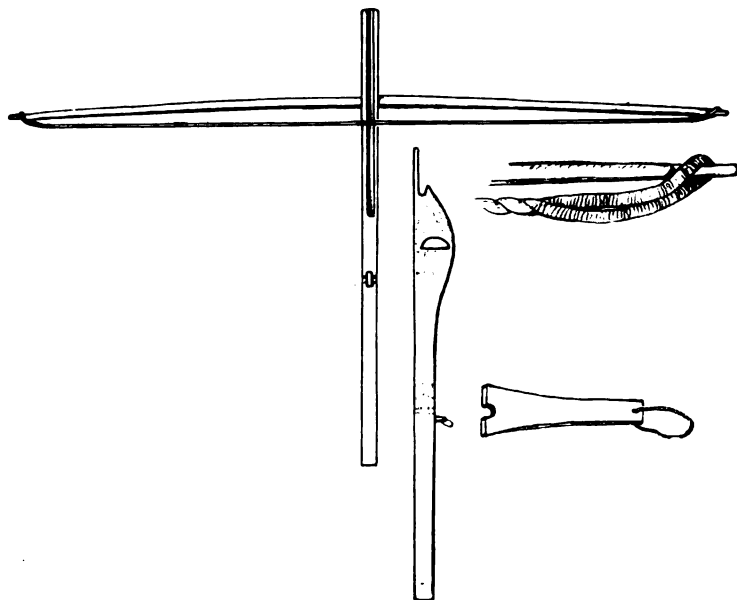


Fig. 75. A Lamet crossbow. Below, the bar, the end of the bow and the trigger.

Hunting

A great deal of the Lamet's supply of meat is obtained by hunting. In comparison with other methods of production, however, it plays a relatively minor role, especially if we take stock raising and agriculture into consideration. The Lamet catch the larger part of wild game by means of traps, while less is obtained by hunting with the crossbow. Dogs are not used in hunting, nor are hunting cocks, which on the other hand are quite common among the Thai peoples and the Meo living in the neighborhood. An organized hunt like the chase does not seem to exist, nor does hunting with nets, which one sees among the Moi tribes, nor have I seen driving into pitfalls nor other methods where several co-operate. The Lamet declare that they know nothing about these methods.

Hunting with the crossbow is used only for smaller animals like birds, squirrels, apes, rats, etc. It is considered a noble sport. I have never heard the Lamet mention any legends about historical crossbows, but on the contrary there are such among the Khuen, where certain historically famous war crossbows even had special names.¹⁾

¹⁾ Statement in an old unpublished Thai manuscript in General Salan's possession.



Fig. 76. The string is fastened to the bow.

I have often noticed how the men sit and improve their crossbows and arrows. The bows become too old after a certain amount of use, and lose their elasticity, and they must be replaced by new ones. They are made of a special kind of bamboo with thick walls. For the string, fiber from a certain kind of tree is used. In order to avoid wear in that part of the string where it is hooked onto the scotch of the bar of the crossbow, it is generally bound with a strip of cane in the middle. The string is not tied fast to the bow, but is loose, and is fastened on with a couple of loops (fig. 75). When the instrument is not in use, the string is not fastened. This is done only when it is to be used for the hunt. The bar is made of a hard, dark variety of wood, and it is taken very good care of always and used for a long period of time. Loose bars are often seen in the community houses, which have been passed on from father to son. Characteristic of the bar of the Lamet's crossbow, is its long nose. The scotch is quite short, about 30 cm., and the whole bar is about 60 to 70 cm. long. The bow is about one meter in length. The trigger is placed either sunk into the bar, as in fig. 75, or even fastened on the side of the bar with a wooden plug, around which it is led. Where it is sunk into the bar, it is prevented from falling out by a knot underneath.

The arrows are the simplest imaginable. They are made of sticks or splints of bamboo. On the drying racks over the hearths in the community



Fig. 77. An arrow for the crossbow.

house there is always to be seen material for arrows, which is in the process of drying. Only when the arrows are really dry are they given their final shape. No special arrow point is used, and the arrow is given a rather blunt tip. At the other end a "steering feather" is fastened, and this is made of a thin strip of bamboo or a bamboo chip. The arrows of the Lamet are never poisoned. Strangely enough they are not acquainted with the art of making poison, in spite of the fact that they live so near the Lantén tribe, who make their poison from the same tree from which the Lamet make their bark cloth (*Antiaris toxicaria*).¹⁾

Although the arrow points are made of only bamboo, they still have an enormous power of penetration. I once made a proof shot with a Lamet crossbow at a distance of 30 meters from a fur plank, and the arrow penetrated about one and a half cm. in the wood without being spoiled. The bows are very difficult to draw. First the string must be fastened on, which is done by placing one foot on the bow and bending this with the help of the hands. It is then ready to be drawn, and this also is done by placing one foot on the bow and taking hold of the string with both hands. It requires quite a bit of strength to draw it back to the notch.

When ready to shoot, the bow is held as far as possible from the eyes with outstretched arms. One seldom shoots at a distance exceeding 50 meters, and usually the distance is less, for the hunter tries to creep as near as possible towards his prey. Besides, it is hardly possible to get long range in the thick jungles that surround the villages of the Lamet.

The Lamet are very particular about trying out their arrows before using them on the hunt. As an average measure of the length of the arrow, one takes the distance between the trigger and one point of the bow. Then shooting at a target is begun, and the arrows are cut off to the length that is deemed the most suitable. The arrows must be absolutely straight, and every time an arrow crosses the bow the arrow is examined minutely to see if it is right, and if necessary it is bent into shape.

¹⁾ I took home with me some arrow poison and some bark from the *Antiaris* tree, and these were examined by the late Prof. C. G. Santesson, who has published his investigation in *Ethnos* (Stockholm, 1940) under the title "Poison de flèches de l'Indo-chine française."

The arrows can go quite some distance, even up to 100 meters and farther, if they are given their full strength.

On the point of the bar a bit of stick-lac is stuck in the scotch, and the arrow is then placed on the scotch and pressed against this so that it easily holds. In this way the crossbow can be held even at a vertical angle without the arrows falling off.

A simple bamboo tube serves as quiver for the arrows.

In early boyhood the Lamet begin their training in shooting with the crossbow. They are given small bows that are easy to draw. One often sees both small boys and fullgrown men practising shooting together. They set up a little leaf or something of the kind at a distance of about 20 or 30 meters, and shoot at this target. They try out different arrows and rectify them to the satisfactory size.

The crossbow is believed to have a spirit (*mbrög äk*; *äk* means crossbow), and this spirit is sacrificed to by means of using blood to fasten a feather on the very tip of the nose of the bar. The arrows will then hit straight, the Lamet told me.

I have never seen the Lamet use a lance in hunting. It is true that they have lances, but they are used only for certain ceremonies, for example, when buffaloes are to be slaughtered in the cult of ancestors.

The Lamet have at one time used guns, which they bought from the Chinese or the Thai peoples. Now these are forbidden by the authorities.

In order to entice roe and deer, the Lamet make use of certain tricks. They take a leaf and fold it double and place the open side between the lips. When this is blown upon, a wailing sound is produced, which resembles the sound made by the young of these animals. Another trick is to take a short bamboo tube and shave off one side until it is very thin. A little tongue is cut out here, and when blown upon the same kind of sound is produced. When the animals hear it, they believe it to be a calf that has got into trouble, and they come out.

The most usual way of getting game is by setting out traps of different kinds in the places where the animals wander. Since the Lamet are constantly in the woods, they naturally are acquainted with the habits of the various animals, the directions in which they wander, and where they stay. They also know at which times it pays to hunt the different species,



Fig. 78. An instrument for enticing roe and deer.



Fig. 79. Warning against spear-trap.

and which time of day is most suitable. Many a time the Lamet have shown me where it was wisest to lay a trap for one animal or another. When we were out walking in the woods or on hunting trips, they often paused just to point out such things. One particular hunting place in the neighborhood of Mokala Panghay that was very popular, was a little ravine near a stream. There was a layer of light-colored earth right at the shore, which probably contained salt, for roes came there frequently and licked the earth. There were a great many prints from their hoofs in the sand all about the place, and they had dug large holes in order to get at the desired earth.

Sometimes when wandering along the paths one can see an animal suddenly disappear into the forest. Fresh traces can often be discerned crossing the paths, and here are suitable places for traps. The Lamet hunters declare that animals often go the same way a number of times. In such places they tie a knot in a reed or some other plant, in order to remember that a trap should be placed there. I wondered if this knot

possibly had some magical import, but was not able to find anything that verified this. It was evidently a purely technical thing used as a reminder; somewhat the same as our tying a knot in a handkerchief.

In those places where traps are placed there is always a risk that a human being might go that way. The trap is often cleverly hid from sight, and not at all easy for a stranger to discover. A sign is placed nearby as a sort of warning: a little bamboo rod split at the top, through which a stick is thrust. A warning of this kind is placed out only in the case of the more dangerous spear-traps. The worst time for hunting is the period of dry, hot spring months, when the swiddens are burned, and the animals penetrate deep into the forests. When the rains return, and especially when the sprouts on the swiddens begin to grow, the animals come forth again and often make their way into the fields and get at the young plants. At this time all kinds of traps surround the swiddens. When the rice is ripe and the harvest over, great numbers of doves usually enter

the swiddens, and then a great many are caught daily in special bird traps which are placed here and there in the fields.

The Lamet are very skilful trap-makers and I give here a description of the various types of traps observed by me among them.

Dead-fall.

Sometimes it happens that masses of rats and mice enter the fields and destroy the crops. For this emergency a great many rat traps are set inside the field, and some on the outside. In one village, Sithoun, I saw that a part of the field was bordered by a stockade in which dead-falls of the type shown in fig. 80 were placed at even distances from each other. The stockade was built of single bamboo splints placed so closely that not a rat could pass through without being forced to go through the openings where the traps were laid. The stockade was about 150 m. long, and was placed just where the rats waited or were accustomed to come in.

As seen in the figure, the rats will go along small bamboo splints (a) that lie on a string (b) the only way they can possibly get in, for the trap is well surrounded by bamboo sticks driven into the ground. Now, when the rats weigh down the sticks, those in their turn press on the string and the key-locking peg (c) is pulled down. The peg (c) is connected with a balancing pole (d), which lies loose on a stick (e) in the trap. At one end the balancing pole holds up a heavy beam which falls down when the trap is sprung. It lies at one end on a simple arrangement of bamboo sticks, which falls down when the beam gets out of balance. The beam is generally about 150 cm. in length and is of very heavy wood.

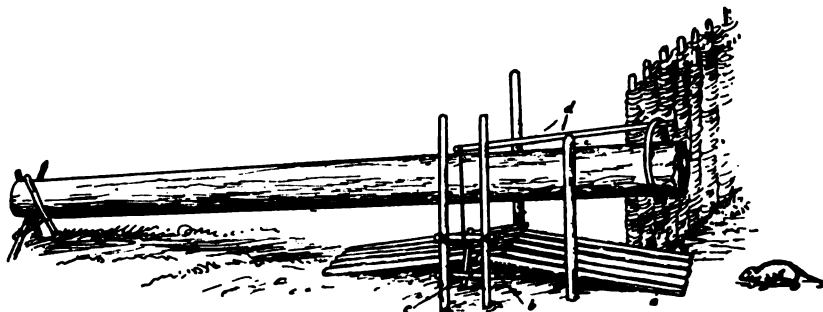


Fig. 80. Dead-fall.

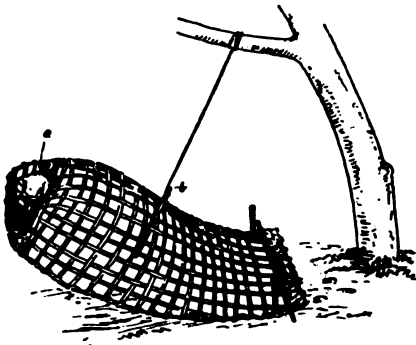


Fig. 81. Bird-trap.

"Kup" (fig. 81).

A case, or shovel-shaped basket of thinly braided bamboo, is used in catching smaller birds, mice, etc. In one part of the basket a small stone (a) is placed, which weighs down and shuts the trap when it is released. The trap is fastened to the ground by a couple of sticks on one side, and on the other is held up by means of a string tied at one end to the branch of a tree or something similar, and at the other

end to the pin of the trap (b). The latter is cut in the shape of a hook and hangs loosely attached to the trap. To this is fastened the bait, a little ball of glutinous rice. With the slightest movement the pin (b) is unhinged and the trap is sprung.

Another weight-trap of the Lamet is shown in figs. 82 and 83. This is often seen in the fields when the harvest is ready, and birds are coming

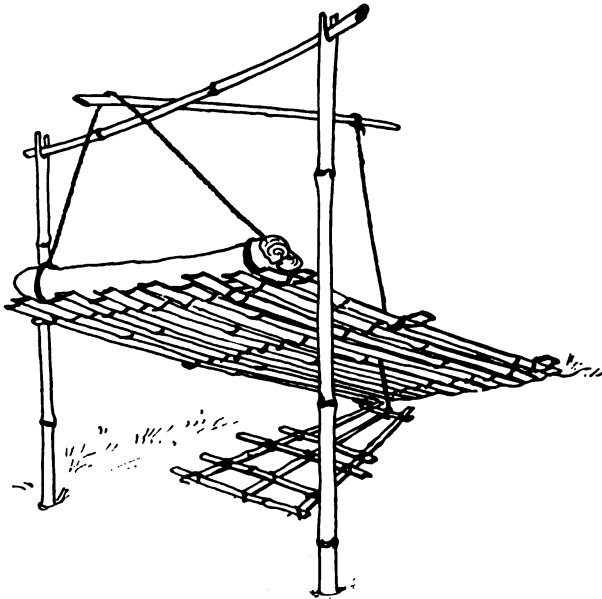


Fig. 82. Bird-trap on the swidden.

and picking up the remaining rice grains. Doves and the like are caught in this way. A square of bamboo sticks, at each end of which a heavy stick is fastened: it stands on the ground on one side, and the other side is propped up by means of a bamboo pole which is balanced on a hurdle of bamboo sticks. To this second side a string is fastened, and this in its turn is attached to a key-stick. Under the trap a hole is dug in the ground and a hurdle of fine bamboo sticks is then connected with the key-stick in such a way that when the birds happen to come in contact with the tread-board of bamboo sticks, the pin is pulled out and the trap falls down. Rice serves as bait, and sometimes the tread-board is strewn with rice stalks or the like.

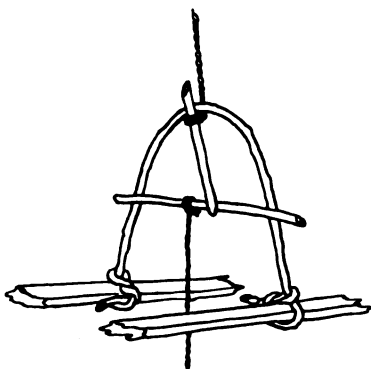


Fig. 83. The key-stick of the trap in fig. 82.

Simple snares.

The snare shown in fig. 84 is used for birds by the Lamet. It is not common, and the Lamet tell us that they learned it from the Lu. It consist of small sticks put in the earth and bound together. The upper ends of these sticks are planed off, so they become very thin and flexible, and at the top of them the snare is fixed.

Spring-pole snares.

These are much more in use among the Lamet than the simple snares. The most common type is shown in fig. 85. It is a thin bamboo stick bent

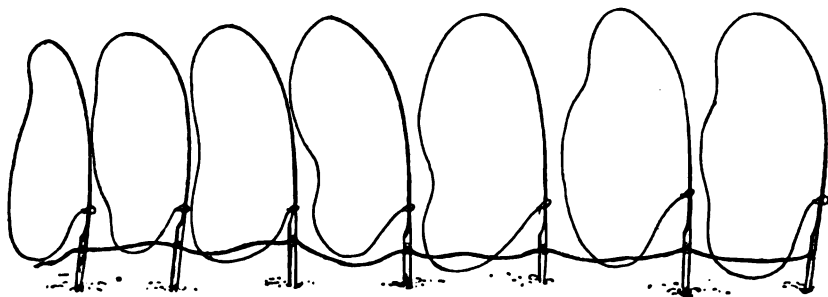


Fig. 84. Snares.

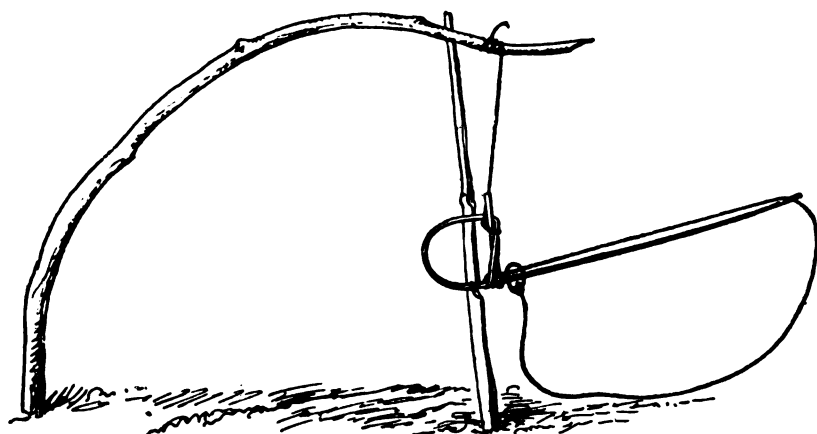


Fig. 85. Spring-pole snare for chevrotains.

as the figure shows. At one end it is forked. The stick serves the purpose of holding down the bent spring-pole and keeping the snare open. Snares of this type exist in various sizes from as small as 10 cm. in length, used for birds, to large ones of 50 cm. in length, for chevrotains and other animals. The stick of the snare is fastened by means of a groove to another bamboo stick that is stuck in the ground.

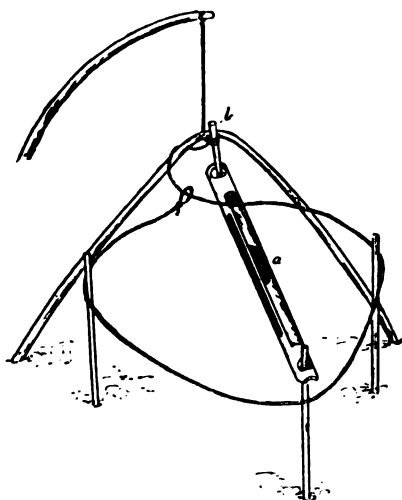


Fig. 86.
Spring-pole snare.

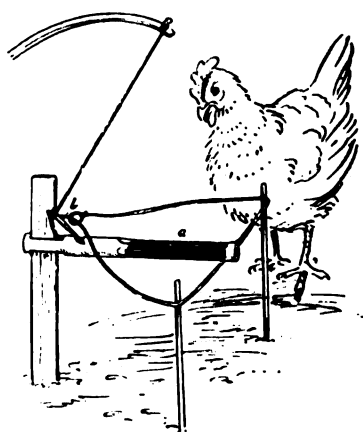


Fig. 87.
Spring-pole snare of Khmu type.



Fig. 88. Spring-pole snare for small animals.

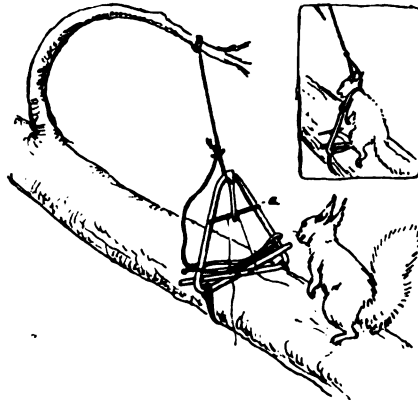


Fig. 89. Spring-pole snare for squirrels.

There are other small spring-pole traps in use. The principle of the two snares shown in figs. 86 and 87 is the same in all. A little stick (b) is fixed to the snare and the spring-pole. It is fastened also to another carved out stick (a) on which the bait rests, bait being in most cases the larvæ of an insect that the wild hens are fond of. When the hen picks at the larva, the bait-pin (a) runs down and the animal is snared. Fig. 86 shows the original Lamet type, and that shown in fig. 87 also is to be found among the Lamet though they say that they have learned of it from their neighbors, the Khmu.

Spring-pole snares with tread-board and key-stick.

These are used for bigger animals like deer, or wild goats. Fig. 88 shows a small one used only for chevrotains. The principle is: if the animal treads on the small planks, the key-stick is forced down and off goes the snare and the string binds the animal as he flies into the air, if the spring-pole is strong enough.

Snares of different kinds.

Fig. 89 shows the ordinary squirrel trap or snare. It is placed up in trees where the squirrels are most likely to be. It is made of a stick bent into a triangle with one base fixed to a tree, and a branch of the same tree is bent down and serves as a spring-pole. A key-stick (a) is fixed with two small threads at the base of the trap. The Lamet are very fond of squirrel meat.

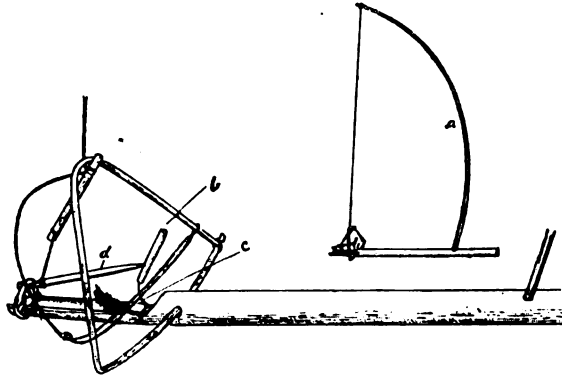


Fig. 90. Rat-trap.

A somewhat similar arrangement is found in the snare seen in fig. 90 which is a common rat snare. It consists of a small bamboo tube about 40 cm. in length, and a bamboo stick serving as a spring-pole placed at an angle to the tube. The bait, a small ball of glutinous rice, is fixed on (b) a feather quill resting on another elastic piece of quill (c). In the quill (b) a stick (d) is loosely fixed and fastened to the snare and the spring-pole.

The next two traps (fig. 91 a and b) are also for rats, and are often put out in the fields, granaries, etc. where rats are likely to seek after rice. These are set out in masses, and masses of them are kept stored in the community house of every Lamet village. Fig. 91 a is made of a bow and a tube of bamboo fixed in a lateral hole of the bow with a hooked stick (a). The snare (b) is very nicely laid in a little groove (c). If the animal happens to push the hook the trap springs and the animal is strangled. The other one, fig. 91 b, has a similar system, but is arranged without a tube. The whole trap is fixed by the hook (a) that is very loosely hooked to the stick.

The rat-trap (fig. 91 c) is common in all Lamet homes, in the kitchen section of the house. The bait (a) is a ball of glutinous rice, connected with a key-stick. The rat is strangled in the snare. I have seen this trap among the Akha also, and both among the Akha and Lamet it is found combined with a crossbow instead of a single spring-pole.

Crossbow traps.

Only in one other case have I seen a trap combined with a crossbow. In a granary in a Lamet village I saw the pieces of an old tiger-trap. It

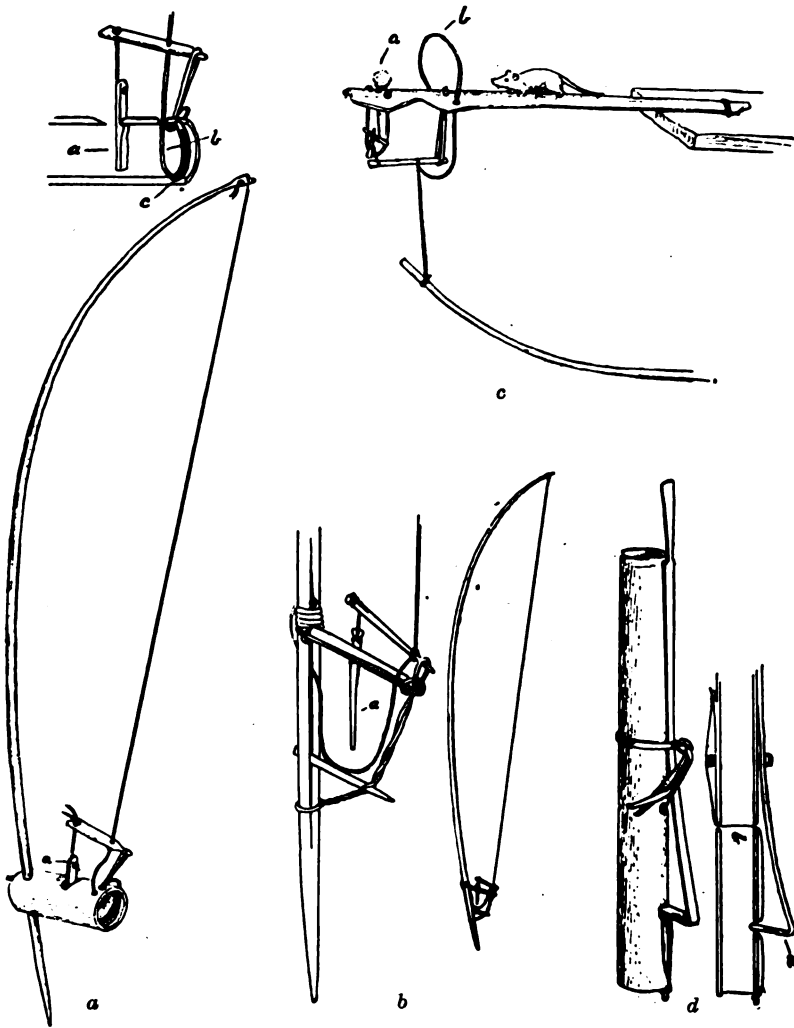


Fig. 91. Three rat-traps and a spring-trap for big larvae (to the right below).

was a crossbow combined with a gun. The crossbow shot off an arrow poised on the string of the bow. Its point was made of a piece of steel that struck against a quartz stone and lighted on some powder which burned down to the powder in the gun. Across the road, where the tiger was in the habit of passing, a cord was stretched and connected with the crossbow's trigger.

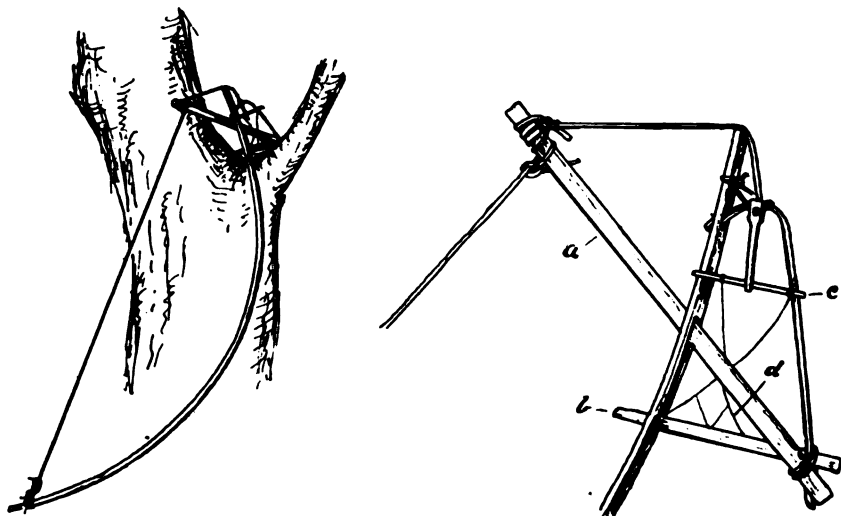


Fig. 92. Snap-trap for squirrels.

Spring-traps.

A trap of this kind is made of a small bamboo tube 23,5 cm. long; (a) is an elastic piece of bamboo, and (b) a cord. The trap is placed at the opening of a hole in the earth where the worms of a certain insect live. The worms come and bite off the string in order to catch a piece of bait on the inside, with the result shown in fig. 91 d. These beetles are eaten by the natives.

Snap-traps.

The Lamet use three kinds of snap-traps, the first one in combination with a bow (fig. 92) for squirrels, and the second one with a heavy log for monkeys. The squirrel-trap is put on a branch as fig. 92 shows. It consist of a bow of bamboo, about 225 cm. in length, strung with a bamboo string; (a) and (b) are the two arms of the trap, (c) is the key-stick, and (d), is a net fixed to the key-stick which entraps the squirrel when touched. The monkey-trap (fig. 93) is put up at the side of a path in the jungle, and a log (d) is laid at the same height as the tree tops and stretched over the road leading to the trap. Monkeys pass the openings in the forest by way of these tree tops. A heavy log (a) pulls down the arm (b) when the net (c) is touched. I have seen these traps with a height of five meters. They are usually made of bamboo, and similar ones though smaller are

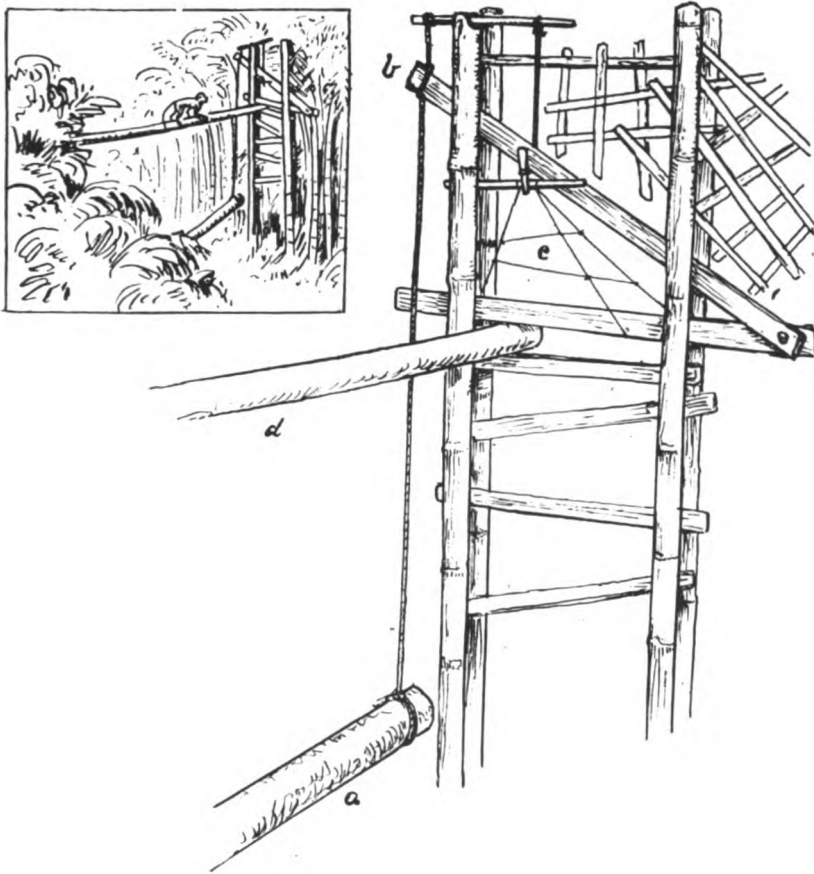


Fig. 93. Snap-trap for monkeys.

put up for squirrels. The third kind of trap (fig. 94) consists of a stick of bamboo which is bent and held tight until the key-stick is released, when it strikes the rat.

Spear-traps.

The most common of all Lamet swidden traps is the spear-trap which is put out for all bigger game. The swiddens of the Lamet are surrounded by such traps, prohibiting wild hogs, deer, etc. from entering and destroying the crops. Fig. 95 explains how it works. The string (a) pulls off the ring (b). The key-stick (c) goes off and a long bamboo spear

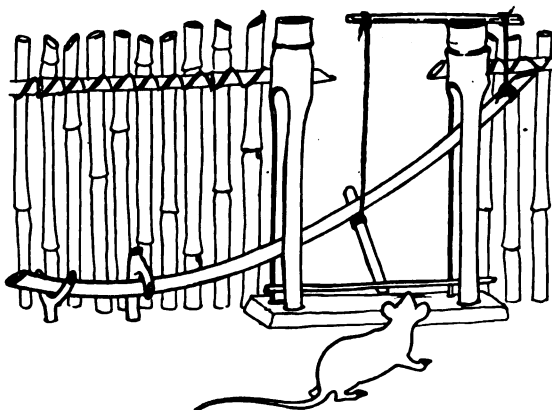


Fig. 94. Snap-trap for rats.

shoots out. The biggest animal caught by the Lamet with this trap is the gaur (*Bos gaurus*) which sometimes can reach two meters in height.

Wolf pits.

The Lamet never use any wolf pits for hunting, as far as I know, but an old man once told me that in former days the villages were surrounded by wolf pits as defences in their constant warfare.

Cages.

Buffaloes run in a more or less half-wild state in the forests, and should one run amuck or get dangerous, he is caught in a special trap built like

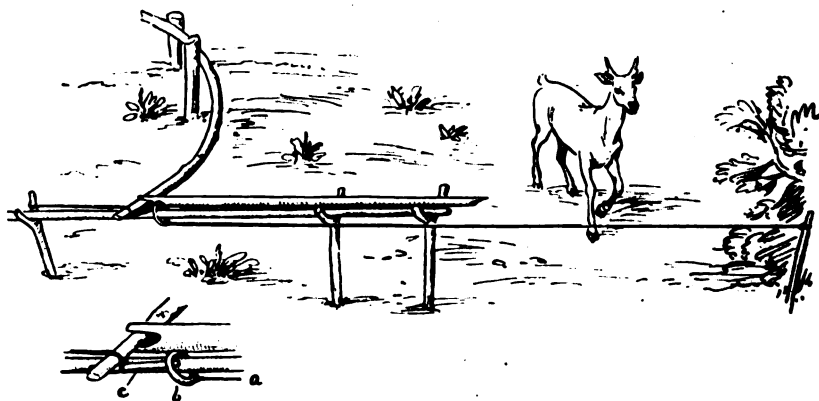


Fig. 95. Spear-trap for big game.



Fig. 96. Hunting net for birds.

a big strong cage. As soon as the buffalo enters the cage, a door automatically falls down and imprisons him. Here the animal is left several days without food and water, and is then freed with a rope tied round his legs so that he can not move quickly. After a while he becomes tamed. These cages are still in use, but I never had the opportunity of seeing one. They were in use in olden times and up to twenty years ago when wild buffalo still was found in the forests of the Lamet region. By means of these cages the animals were caught and tamed. This method resembles that used by the Moi in the southern Annamese mountain range in catching and taming wild elephants.

Hunting nets.

Hunting nets for big animals are unknown among the Lamet but are said to occur among the Moi tribes in southern Laos. The Lamet, use only a small net for catching birds. It is pyramidal with a square base measuring 115 cm. and a height of 85 cm., fig. 96. As seen in the picture, it is tied up in a tree and fastened to the ground with sticks. One side of the net is held open by a small cord running from a small stick to a round hut nearby, built of palm leaves. Here the hunter sits holding the cord. Inside the net, paddy is spread out. The hunter then calls the birds, usually certain kinds of pigeons, with the aid of a sort of flute made of a

calabash, to which a tube serving as an airduct is attached. The call is similar to that of the birds. As soon as the birds enter the net, the hunter closes it.

Traps are made by the men, who are often seen sitting in their private *cong* or in the community house working on the details of the traps. All the men are acquainted with the art of laying traps and making them, and all the men hunt. Yet some of them are more skillful and more interested in hunting than others. One particular case was my friend Ai Kam from Mokahang Tai. He accompanied me everywhere in my wanderings over the whole province of Haut-Mékong, and served at the same time as headboy. He really had the profession of medicine man. He had lost his wife and child, and was thus without a family of his own, and his physique was rather poor, with very weak arms and evidently a weak heart. He could not carry burdens like the others, and it was difficult for him to go uphill quickly along the steep slopes. For this reason he seldom occupied himself with farming, at least not with the heavy work of tree-felling. Instead, he earned his keep by setting out traps in the woods for others. In this way he obtained meat for himself, and extra as well. The traps must be looked after frequently, and this takes up a lot of time. Thus the other men saved time, and gave him something for his trouble. As a matter of fact, Ai Kam was a specialist in everything connected with traps. He could not make a living as medicine man, for the latter receive no pay for their work. When a man goes out in the woods to lay traps, he is not allowed to sleep with a woman on the preceding day, but must lie in one of the *cong*. Besides, hunting is connected with other taboos, which we shall soon return to. These restrictions did not mean so much for Ai Kam, who always slept alone in the *cong* which was his permanent dwelling.

The Spirit of the Forest

When a wild animal has been caught, an extra man is called in case the animal is too heavy for one man to bear alone. Sacrifice to the forest spirit (*mbrōy prān*) is made on the spot where the trap is laid, and when this has been done the animal can be taken home. While on the home march, the men beat on a bamboo tube, the lower end of which has been cut out in the form of a long tongue (fig. 97). They beat on this the whole way home, right up to the time they reach the village. This is done in order to frighten away the animal's spirit.

Incidentally, I saw the same thing among the Puli-Akha after the successful trapping of a bear. All the young men bearing home their bit of bear-meat beat on a bamboo tube of their own, which was cut in the same way as described above. When they reached the home of the hunter, they continued the music, and the hunter sat on the veranda and placed three bamboo tubes of different lengths on his outstretched legs, and these tubes gave forth three different tones. His son stood beside him and beat on a single tube of this kind. The music continued all night. It is interesting to discover that the same kind of primitive xylophone is met with in many parts of Indonesia and Melanesia. Kaudern¹⁾ considers that this is one of the most ancient of musical instruments in Celebes. It is very possible that it is a very ancient form of instrument, which perhaps has originally been connected with hunting rites, or perhaps generally has had the purpose of driving away dangerous spirits. Now I am going to give some examples of how hunting is carried on in different villages. The first example is taken from Sithoun Neua, and was related to me by the chief.

The day before one lays out a trap, everything is prepared first of all in the *cong*. Thus first, a *talē* is placed at each entrance in order to prevent people from other villages and pregnant women from entering the *cong*. If such persons should happen to come in, no game will be caught. If one makes traps in the community house, one must sit at a special hearth, and must eat only there. One must also sleep in the *cong*. It is not right to live at home and sleep with one's wife. One should not cook one's own food, either, but this should be done by a certain man. The latter, however, is not allowed to partake of food together with the hunters. On the day when the traps are to be set, one must also eat in the *cong*. When one is at work on the traps, one should not eat salt or vegetables, only meat, red pepper and rice. On the day after the laying of the traps, one should kill two hens and cook them. They are then taken to the place where one has set out the traps. Two



Fig. 97.
Bamboo gong used
to frighten away the
spirit of the game.

¹⁾ Walter Kaudern: Musical instruments in Celebes. Göteborg, 1927, pp. 281 seq.

sacrifice trays are made of bamboo (*xəu*), which are placed north and south of the trap. On each tray eight different things are placed, and eight pieces of each thing: piles of tobacco, betel leaves, *meg* (fermented tea leaves), balls of cooked rice, pieces of wood, which represent money (*kmul*), bits of chicken, small cups containing brandy or wine, areca nuts. Afterwards one returns to the community house with what is left of the hens, and eats them there, and sleeps there one night more. On the following day one is not allowed to work. Then one should go now and again and take a look at the traps.

When one has caught something and is about to return with it, a sacrifice is made on a *xəu* (sacrificial tray) and one says to *mbrög prăn*, the spirit of the forest: "*Mbrög prăn*, take and eat the ears, eat at the cross-roads, eat *meg*, smoke tobacco, chew the areca nuts and the betel leaves, receive the money."

This sacrifice is performed on the path near the trap. When one is about to return to the village with the game, one makes a *ševjīt'* (= a bamboo tube with one end cut out like a tongue). This is beat upon all the way home, and then the children of the village come and meet one. The hunters hand over the *ševjīt'* to the children, who beat on them and shriek: "Ho . . . ho . . . ho" This is done only when a larger animal has been caught. The chief believed that it is done in order to give a signal, and because the ghost of the animal likes it. But I got contrary information from other men. They declared that the cries and signaling with the bamboo tubes were meant to frighten away the ghost of the animal.

When the hunters come into the village they cry: "Into which *cong* can I bear the animal?" The people shout back: "In this *cong*!" And they bear the animal there. Then the door of the *cong* is taken away and used as a kind of cutting board. The animal is laid on it with its head in the direction facing the place where it was caught, for otherwise one can not catch other animals in the same place. Then the head is cut off and cleaned thoroughly, all the meat and other material being removed so that only the skull remains, and this is hung up under the roof in the *cong* in that section lying between the poles that face the trap that got the animal. If it is not placed correctly, *mbrög prăn* will become angry, and one will never be able to trap animals any more. If one makes a mistake and breaks this rule, one must be fined 1.50 piasters, two hens and two bottles of brandy besides. The money is divided up among the *lem*, and the hens and the brandy are consumed by the men in the community house.

The animal is then cut up into sections and again into small pieces. Every family must have a bit, and the hunters get what is left over. They lay the meat up on a *pretāl* (a drying rack placed over the hearth).

When a man returns from the hunt and is about to hang up the skull of the animal, the village drum is beat upon, and then *mbrōg prān* comes. A *xāu* is then made, and four kinds of sacrifice are made to the spirit: an ear of the trapped animal, (the other one has already been sacrificed where the trap lies in the forest), four betel leaves, four areca nuts and four piles of tobacco and four piles of *meg*.

mbrōg prān lives in the skulls of game. When the head is hung up, the lance that killed the animal must also be tied to it, or fastened next to it. When a new *cong* is built, the old lances are taken and thrown into the woods, and only one skull of each kind of animal is kept. In order to hang up an old skull in a newly built *cong*, one must have a raw egg and either a whole or half a bottle of brandy. A hole is made in the egg and the contents blown out and cooked, and then the eggshell is placed on the horns, and the head is decorated with bamboo tassels and wooden coins, after which the cooked contents of the egg are smeared on the skull and the whole dosed with brandy, and one says: "Thou (*mbrōg prān*) must remain here, thou shalt not go elsewhere."

When one sees game disappear from a path, one makes a *sitō*, a knot on a reed, and a trap is placed there shortly after.

In the villages in the western part of the Lamet district, gaur (*Bos gaurus*) are often caught in the large spear-traps, and the following is an example of how these are taken in hand. When a gaur is caught, the skull and the lance that killed the animal are hung up in the *éog yig*. The lance is decorated with plants, partly the leaves of *pen keciö*, and partly banana leaves (*mpul*). Part of the stem of the banana is also fastened to the lance. For the gaur are very fond of eating these plants.

The skull is hung up for *phi prān*, who watches over all animals. This spirit resembles a man. No sacrifice is made when the trap is set, but if the trap has not been effective after a few days, a cock is sacrificed. If the trap lies in the woods, the cock should be red, and if it lies near a pool, the cock should be white. When sacrificing one says to *phi prān*: "The trap has not caught any animal, so I give you an animal and later I shall give you game." When one discovers a trapped animal, it is cut up on the spot. A bamboo rod is driven into the earth near the trap, and here betel, and the ears, nose and tail of the animal are sacrificed.

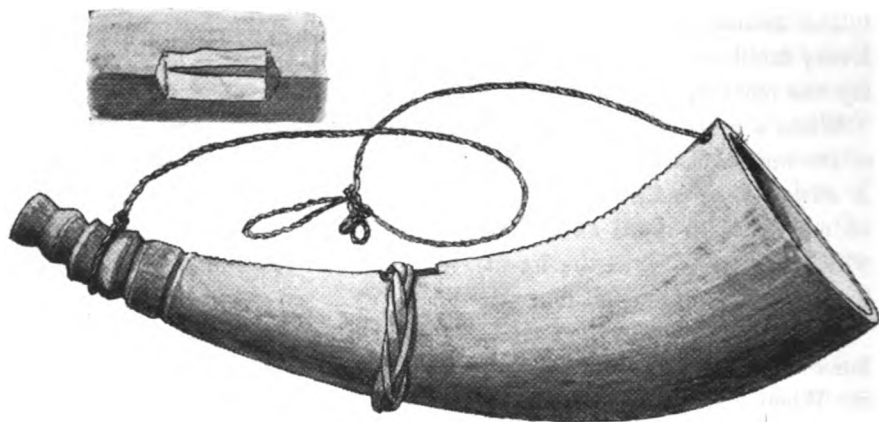


Fig. 98. Sound instrument of buffalo horn used to frighten away the spirit of a gaur when it has been trapped. In the middle a free-reed of brass protected by a ring of plaited cane.

Then the animal is carried home and cut up into bits which are smoked on the drying racks in the community house.

When a gaur is caught, a big feast is held lasting ten days. The gongs are beat upon, and the people sing and drink wine and brandy. Bits of meat are sacrificed, and *lap* (finely chopped meat), and soup as well, to *phi prān*. There is a little sacrifice shelf in the community house which is made of bamboo (*prāk prān*), and the meat to be sacrificed is laid there. The skull which has been cleaned and dried, is hung up in the community house, and a *talē* is fastened to it, which is intended to prevent other spirits than *mbrōg prān* from living in the skull. The horns are decorated with tassels of split bamboo (*śuksūn*). *phi prān* lives in the skull, and if one has a skull, one is sure to get other animals, and then the animals will fall down dead near the traps. They will not be able to free themselves and get away so that one cannot find them.

The meat which is taken from the skull is salted and placed in bamboo tubes which are hung up under the sacrifice shelf. On the tenth day of feasting this meat is sacrificed to *phi prān* on the sacrifice shelf.

Sacrifices of this kind are made only for mammals and not for birds. Birds have no *phi* (spirit). No feast is held for any animal besides the gaur.

During the ten days of feasting, nobody is allowed to either leave or enter the village, and the roads that are considered to be most dangerous are those over which the gaur was borne from the trap in the forest. They

are afraid of meeting *phi ketig* (the ghost of the gaur). For the days of feasting, village gates are placed at the entrances of the village, and these are moreover supplied with *talē*, wooden swords and other magical signs, in order to prevent the ghost of the gaur from entering the village.

In Mokala Panghay this takes place in a manner similar to that of other Lamet villages, and there the same conceptions in regard to *mbrōg prān* (the ghost of game) exist. In sacrificing to the latter out in the woods, a blade of grass called *luk hik*¹⁾ is placed in the mouth of the animal. They beat on the eyes of the animal with this grass, and with another plant called *rlai* (brooms are made with this) the ears of the animal are beat upon. Later on a little husked rice is scattered over the animal in order to call forth *mbrōg prān*. This performance is called *čum*. At this time one says:

<i>mbrōg prān, mbrōg prūg</i>	Spirit of forest, ghost of game,
<i>ā, teg mpēt, teg ntōl</i>	Oh, drink brandy, eat yeast!
<i>vōl puug, vōl pō</i>	Come ye herds, come ye flocks,
<i>nō krē</i>	Soon I shall (imprison),
<i>nō gklēš</i>	Soon shall (the trap) be free,
<i>čum pōš</i>	I strew white rice on the deer,
<i>čum prāš</i>	I strew white rice on the boars,
<i>yām puug, yām pō</i>	The shriek of the herd, the shriek of the flock,
<i>pēn tō, rōi tō, aah . . .</i>	Give (us) animals, a hundred, aaah . . .
<i>tei čōm plōm gā</i>	The point of the spear, the rope tickles,
<i>pēn tō, rōi tō</i>	Give bodies, give a hundred,
<i>nō krē, nō gklēš</i>	The trap soon imprisons, it is soon released,
<i>kah yōm, kah it</i>	Give death, give sleep.
<i>rōi teg ntū, əg pæn'</i>	Flies eat the anus, larvæ in the excrement,
<i>luk hik tōp gai</i>	With <i>luk hik</i> I beat (the animal's) eyes,
<i>rlai tōp yōk</i>	With <i>rlai</i> I beat the ears.
<i>teg mpēt, teg ntōl</i>	Drink brandy, eat yeast!

¹⁾ *hik* = a kind of grass; *luk* = a classifier meaning "blade."

CHAPTER 10.

Stock Raising

The Lamet have the following domestic animals: buffalo, zebu (*Bos indicus*), pigs, chickens, dogs and bees. Except for the last-named, all these animals are eaten, even dogs — though this is not so usual — but they are slaughtered only in connection with sacrifice. Buffaloes are in a class of their own, since they are considered to be the most valued and most expensive of all domestic animals. They are sacrificed only to the spirits of ancestors. This difference between buffaloes and other domestic animals is indicated in an interesting way. In the Lamet language classifiers are used, a particle which appears commonly in several East Asiatic languages. For example, in order to express two hens, one must say “*ēr laār tō*,” which is equal to: hens two bodies. Thus *tō* is a classifier. But buffaloes are an exception. In their case one should use the distinguishing mark *kun*, which otherwise is used in connection with persons who are elderly and worthy of honor, old people in general. Thus two buffaloes = *trāk laār kun*. This can possibly in some way be connected with the fact that buffalo are sacrificed to ancestors, as well as in connection with the burial of parents, but I have not succeeded in finding out just what this connection is.

The color of the buffaloes is of some importance. The black ones are considered more valuable than the white or light red ones.

All the buffaloes of the village go loose in the woods. Sometimes even the buffaloes belonging to the neighboring village graze at the same places, as the case was in Mokala Panghay and Mokala Luang. Nobody herds them. Now and then only do the owners take a look at them, to prevent their getting too far away, or being taken by a stray tiger. Sometimes they are driven into the village to be examined, especially if one of them should show signs of injury or sickness.

The buffaloes are often attacked by tigers, but it is not often that a tiger succeeds in getting hold of those that are fullgrown. Tigers aim rather for the calves. There is no means of protecting the animals against the

tigers, either. To be sure, a spear-trap or a crossbow-trap combined with a gun could be set out, but these could get the buffaloes just as well as the tigers. However, in one village they had set such traps after leading the buffaloes into the village for the night and tying them up there. But they did not succeed in getting the tiger, and they gave up the effort.

In order to lead the buffalo, a hole is bored in the partition of the nose, and a bamboo strip or a rope is stuck through the hole. Every buffalo is provided also with a bell made of a bit of bamboo about 15 cm. thick, on the outer side of which two jointed clappers strike.

Since buffaloes like to make their way into the swiddens, the latter are protected with fencing, but after the harvest the animals are let in there for grazing.

I did not observe any castration of buffaloes.

Sometimes it happens that the buffaloes, which are already more or less half-wild and are never used in any kind of work, can become quite ferocious and impossible to lead. Such a buffalo is dangerous and must be imprisoned in some kind of a trap. An enclosure consisting of strong palisades and a trap-door is built, and then the buffalo is enticed into it and the door is dropped. The animal is left standing there and allowed to starve until it is tame. Gradually it becomes tractable again and is let out and placed with the rest of the herd. In Mokala Panghay they told me that long ago there were wild buffaloes in the woods, and these were tamed in the same way.

Buffaloes play quite an important role economically and socially, and I shall discuss this in chapter 15.

In only a few villages have I seen zebu, mainly in Upper Lamet. They are not considered as having the same value, in connection with sacrifice, as the buffalo. In some villages the herds of zebu are decidedly larger than those of buffaloes, probably because of the fact that they are easier to look after. They are always led into the villages at night, usually coming home of their own accord. They are kept on the village square. Neither buffaloes nor cows are milked, nor are they used for any kind of work. No implements are made either from their hides or their bones.

Among the Upper Lamet, grazing grounds are limited to the property of the village. However, should a stranger pass by the village with his buffaloes, he is allowed to let them graze along the road. In Mokala, among the Lower Lamet, the case is otherwise, however. There a man can allow his buffaloes to graze right in the neighborhood of bordering villages, for there are no definite boundaries there as there are among the Upper

Lamet. I cannot say definitely if this was the case generally among the Lower Lamet, or just a peculiarity for Mokala.

It would be interesting to know how many buffaloes are to be found in each village, since they are of importance economically. I have never been able to count them. They never lead all of the animals into the village at the same time, only one or two at a time. And to try to count the number that make up a herd in the woods is not so easy, for they do not keep together all day long. Also, the Lamet are very secretive about this, their capital, and they are not willing to tell who owns the buffaloes, or how many the various owners have. To be sure, official statistics on the matter exist, made by the tax bailiff in each canton, but these figures cannot be depended upon since they are obtained only by word of mouth.

Every family owns a number of chickens and pigs, which run loose in the villages during the daytime. At night the pigs are lured into pigsties, which either are situated under the platform of the houses or stand separately. As a matter of fact it is quite common for a tiger to creep forth during the evening and try to get hold of a pig. Among the Lower Lamet where the family moves out to the swiddens, they take some of their pigs with them. In this case they build a sty near the watch house. The case is not the same among the Upper Lamet. Transporting the pigs there and back is usually done by carrying them. They are bound or plaited in a cage of bamboo, which is tied to a bar carried by two men on their shoulders. Another method is to tie a rope to one hind leg, and force the pig to go by hitting it with a stick. However, this is a troublesome method and requires a lot of time.

The pigs are fed with bran and rice water in the morning, as soon as the rice for the family is cooked, i. e., shortly after sunrise. The larger pigs get the coarser mashed husks, and the little pigs the finer bran. When the food is put into the troughs — bowls of hollowed-out wood or thick bamboo tube — the pigs begin to fight over it, and someone must keep order with a stick and see that all get food. As soon as a pig has eaten his ration he runs to another house and tries to steal there. The largest and strongest pigs however, must be fed in the sties, in order to prevent them from taking the food of the smaller, weaker ones. Afterwards all of them are let loose. Just before sunset the whole procedure is repeated, and the larger pigs are enticed into the sties where they are fed. It is generally older people that take care of this job. During the day the pigs go free in the village or its immediate vicinity and hunt for food. Nobody watches over them. Perhaps someone cuts down a branch of wild bananas for them

now and then, and these are greedily eaten up by the pigs. No special food is prepared for them, however, as for example neighboring tribes like the Lantén and Yao do, and there the pigs are large and well-fed in contrast to the rather small ones of the Lamet. All the pigs in the whole province are black and rather long-legged. Sometimes they have white spots. They resemble strongly the wild pigs that are to be found in the district.

When a pig is to be slaughtered, a knife is thrust into its heart, and an attempt is made to gather up all the blood, which is considered a delicacy. This is seasoned with red pepper and is eaten with rice. The fat is cut away and melted down. It is stored then in bamboo tubes. Strangely enough it keeps fresh quite a while. The meat is then cut up into strips in order to dry.

Sometimes buyers come from Houeisai, or perhaps the Lamet themselves go to the market there; but they do not sell many pigs. Each family has seldom more than two or three plus a number of little ones.

The price of pigs varies according to size. They are measured by taking a strip of bamboo and placing it round the pig at the shoulder, behind the front legs. The bamboo strip is then folded in half, and the number of handwidths is taken. This is done in the same way as in ball play, when one "takes" the club. Every handwidth is worth one piaster. A normal Lamet pig usually costs about 4 piasters.

The male pigs are castrated, and only one boar is kept for the whole village. As soon as he becomes too big he is slaughtered. The Lamet say that completely full-grown male pigs are dangerous.

Just like the pigs, the chickens run loose in the village during the day. In the evening they are enticed by means of grains of rice into their cages, which are closed and hung up under the houses. This is done in order to protect them from the civet cat which generally manages to steal quite a number of chickens. On the swiddens a special partition for chickens is built under the floor. The chickens are seldom fed, but once in a while get some cooked rice that has stood a long time, or a little bran. They have to search for their food themselves for the most. As a rule they are thin, without an ounce of fat on their bodies. The species is most certainly mixed, but resembles the wild variety most. On the verandas or under the roofs of the specially built pigsties, nests are arranged for the hens, where they can lay their eggs and sit on them. As was the case with the pigs, it is mostly women that look after the chickens. These jobs are always connected with the preparation of food, or more correctly, with the husking

and cooking of rice. The Lamet have no knowledge of the breeding of chickens. They set most value on a handsome cock with beautiful tail feathers, suitable for sacrifice. The color of the cocks is of importance, and the Lamet do not care to sell them, for they are needed for the numerous sacrifices. Hens are only fit for the lesser and unimportant sacrifices.

Dogs are numerous in every Lamet village. Including the puppies, it is estimated that every house has about ten. No special food is arranged for them, and they must content themselves with what is thrown to them, or with what is left over when the pigs have eaten. They usually lick the troughs clean. When slaughtering takes place they get some of the entrails. They are everlastingly hungry and are always ready to steal food. They are treated kindly otherwise. They generally remain in the village, and are really there as watch dogs. Hunting with dogs is unknown. A definite race cannot be distinguished among the dogs of the Lamet as it can elsewhere, for example among the Meo, and the mixture is something awful. If a stranger arrives at a village, he is immediately attacked by these dogs.

Pigs and dogs are the village sweepers, and the reader can imagine what this can mean in some cases.

At night the dogs begin barking for the slightest disturbance, and if a tiger should approach the village, the dogs flock together at a respectable distance from the tiger and begin to bark till the whole village is awake. The people stamp on the ground and shriek and make all kinds of noise in order to frighten the tiger away.

Dogs are sacrificed to the spirit of the village gate. The meat of the sacrificed animal is given to children to eat, since the grownups do not like it. This is the only case I know of where dog meat is eaten. There is no direct raising of dogs for food.

I have seen tame bees in only a few villages among the Lower Lamet. In Mokala Panghay there was only one man who kept bees. He had three hives made of the hollowed-out trunk of a tree. He told me that his bees were originally wild bees. Otherwise, the Lamet fetch honey and wax from the wild bees in the woods. I do not know how they go about this, for I have never seen them do it, but they told me that they smoke out the bees. Honey is used only as a means of sweetening, and is of no great importance to them in the preparation of food. On the other hand, collecting wax is a thing of importance. The wax is sold to the Buddhistic Thai, since the latter use a great number of wax candles. The Lamet themselves use wax candles, but to a decidedly lesser degree.

They are not allowed to be used within the dwellings, and are lighted only within the *éog* in connection with the drinking of rice wine. In this case they are fastened to the edge of the wine jug. When a stranger comes to the village — a European or a Thai — he is honored with the burning of candles which are presented together with flowers and eggs. This is a kind of greeting of welcome which they have learned from the Thai peoples.

In former days, previously to the coming of the French in 1896, the Lamet payed taxes in the form of wax to the Prince of Muong Nan. At that time they could produce large quantities. The wax is melted and filtered through a kind of fibre taken from a certain kind of palm. The process consists of stopping a ball of this fibre near the opening in a thick bamboo tube, and then pouring in the melted wax. The wax is then allowed to harden, whereupon the bamboo tube is broken up. This refining process is often repeated several times.

Besides the domestic animals described here, one can sometimes see monkeys. These are caught when they are young, and kept as pets. They are generally tied up.

None of the animals are tamed by means of some special process, besides wild buffaloes in olden times, and none are used in any kind of labor.

CHAPTER 11.

Agriculture

The farming of the Lamet is very primitive from a technical point of view, since they have no implements besides axes, chopping knives, sowing-sticks, and a few baskets. Hoes and ploughs are unknown. They have no permanent fields, either, nor cultivation by means of terracing, and they know nothing about irrigation. Theirs is a simple cultivation of swiddens, and consists of clearing a bit of forest during the cold season, and when the cut-down forest has dried during the warm season, burning the clearing. Later, when the rains come, the Lamet go out and sow. There is no hoeing or loosening of the earth, for there is very little undergrowth in these forests. Besides, when it has rained awhile, the earth becomes loose and mellow.

Various theories about the origin of the most ancient form of farming have been presented by different geographers, and among these Sauer¹⁾ has declared that the oldest form of farming was bound up with forests and not with open plains overgrown with grass and other plants which form sods and make the working of the earth impossible by means of primitive implements. On the other hand, Sauer means that the earth in the forests is more or less bare because of the lack of undergrowth, and it should therefore be in such places, after the burning of the forest, that primitive man could find earth that was suitable for cultivation. There is reason for believing that this theory is correct, and the almost implementless primitive farming of the Lamet illustrates this condition to a surprising degree. The question that puzzles is: How did the Lamet get along before they got hold of axes of iron? With simple stone axes it was no easy job to chop down the hard varieties of wood that is to be found in the forests of the Lamet. However, it is quite possible that they managed the cultivation of swiddens with the help of stone axes in that

¹⁾ Carl Sauer: "American agriculture origins, a consideration of nature and culture." *Essays in Anthropology*, Berkeley, 1936.

part of the forest where the thick-stemmed variety of bamboo seen in certain tracts of the Lamet district prevailed. I am not in a position to state whether this bamboo forest is an original type of vegetation, or whether it has spread just because of the fact that it has grown up on old deserted swiddens. In this case a botanist could be of great help to the anthropologist. In any case, however, it is conceivable that the forest could be hewn with stone axes, but then the swiddens could not assume any great proportions, at least they could not be of the size that they are today. It is possible that before the Lamet got hold of iron, their fields were decidedly smaller and did not mean so much for them. Added to this we must remember that the swiddens are not permanent, for according to the system of the Lamet they cannot be used longer than a year. With the use of stone axes, this would mean a terrific amount of labor every year.

This discarding of the swiddens after a year is due to the great amount of denudation and erosion during the rainy season. If a bit of ground is left open and bereft of trees for more than a year, all the nourishment is gradually soaked out of the earth, and the latter becomes valueless. During the rainy season the surface layer of the earth is gradually peeled off. As a result of this the forest cannot grow there again. *Imperata* and other varieties of grass appear instead, and take possession of the old swidden which thus becomes transformed into a steppe. Many such are to be seen in Indochina, and are also to be found in Indonesia where they are called *alang-alang*-fields. These are the result of a too intensive cultivation of swiddens up in the mountains. When these grass fields have once made their appearance, the earth there can never be of any use. Therefore the swidden cultivators must clear a new bit of earth. And when they have exhausted this also, they move on to new tracts and gradually ruin the whole supply of forest in the mountains. Such is the state of affairs among a number of mountain tribes, e. g., the Meo and others. In other words these peoples use one swidden as long as it is possible to do so, and after that the whole village moves on. The French call these cultivators of clearings "mangeurs de bois," and their agriculture is more or less nomadic in character. Erosion, also, leaves a strong impression on the mountain slopes that are devoid of forest, before this grass begins to spread. In several places I have noticed how rivers and streams have dug canyon-like grooves in the loose layers of earth, which are then made deeper year after year. Landslides occur, where large sections of earth are simply shuffled away. These and similar catastrophes



Fig. 99. House groups in Pouvé Luong, a village built on a deserted swidden. To the left in the background a new-cut swidden (the light grey triangle). Old regrowing swiddens are seen beside virginal forest.

are usual among several of the swidden-cultivating tribes in the mountains, but such is not the case among the Lamet or their kinsmen the Khmu.

In the Lamet district a steppe is seldom to be seen, and the Lamet, as I have already mentioned, are not nomadized. Thus, when they have harvested, they leave the swidden, and allow the forest to repossess the lost territory. Then they do not return to the same place until after from twelve to fifteen years. Only then has the forest grown up to the extent that the land can again be used for cultivation. Thus it is easy to understand that the Lamet require vast regions for their disposition, and indeed, they have no lack of these. As already mentioned in another chapter, the density of population and of settlement in the Lamet district is very low, and besides, great regions are uninhabited.

The picture in figure 99 illustrates to some degree what the Lamet district looks like. In the grey part we see different shades, which indicate different kinds of vegetation. The light spot up in the lefthand corner is a quite newly made swidden, still unsown with the earth lying quite bare. On the right we see a darker shade of color. This is a clearing cultivated the year previous to the taking of this photograph, and the ground is covered

with bushes. To the left we see a tract with still thicker vegetation. This consists of bushes and young trees which are in the act of growing up. A newly deserted swidden like this, covered with bush growth, is called *prim* by the Lamet. There the forest gradually grows up again, and a young forest of this kind the Lamet call *lau*. Not until after 12-15 years have the trunks grown to any considerable size, and the undergrowth given way to the overshadowing trees. A forest like this is called *klut*, and is just the kind that is suitable for clearing.

The Lamet distinguish between the different kinds of soil. These vary between red earth (*ktæ reag*), black earth (*ktæ lag*), sandy earth (*ktæ præh*) and clay earth (*ktæ kə*). The red earth is considered very good, especially if it rains much. The black earth is excellent under all circumstances. Clay is not so first-class, and sandy earth is not worth much, according to the Lamet. I tried innumerable times to find out what conception the Lamet had as reasons for considering one type of earth better than another, and expected to hear possibly some interesting details in connection with some irrational conceptions. But in spite of repeated questioning, nothing of the kind made its appearance. Evidently their idea is simply that there are both good and poor kinds of earth in existence, and that these qualities have no connection at all with any supernatural conceptions. As we shall see farther on, the power of growth of the rice is dependent on a conception concerning the soul of rice.

Agriculture begins in January or February or thereabout with the chopping down of the swidden that is to be cleared. But before that, while still occupied with last year's harvest, the workers had already decided which tract would be suitable for the new swidden. The men are often out in the woods for hunting or fishing, and the women for gathering plants, and they are all well acquainted with their surroundings. They remember very well also where the previous swiddens have stood, and just what kind of earth was to be found in each of them. As the harvest nears completion, there is much talk and discussion about next year's swidden, and where it shall be placed, and one family discusses with another about which districts each and every group can claim. The Lamet say that no disputes are necessary, for there is such an unlimited amount of land. The important question concerns the distance of the swidden from the village. All will live as near as possible to the village, and I got the impression that the *lem*, through their prestige, claimed the swiddens lying nearest the village.

It is not often the case that a single family clears its own swidden, but

rather than as a rule several families or more correctly house groups join together on one. The number can vary from two to ten families. Among the Upper Lamet it seems to be the rule that many families co-operate. Among the Lower Lamet it is seldom that this number exceeds five. It is difficult to give any reason for this difference. There is one possibility, and that is that the amount of working power among the Upper Lamet is less, due to the fact that several generations of bachelors make their way to Siam, seeking work. Therefore the swidden for each family must be smaller than is the case with the Lower Lamet, where the bachelors remain at home. Evidently there is a certain optimum for the size of a swidden, but I have no explanation for the factors which are connected with this point. In order to get at the reasons for a thing like this, a fairly large amount of statistic material is required in regard to various swiddens, and, as anyone can understand, such an undertaking is connected with a great amount of labor, since one must go from village to village within a relatively short space of time and map out the various swiddens.

Simultaneously with the seeking of new land for clearing, the Lamet families discuss with each other the matter of which of them shall join together for co-operative work. Some of my informers told me that they try to retain the same swidden group from year to year. When I say swidden group, I mean naturally the families co-operating on one swidden. The Lamet declare that they follow no rule in choosing the families that are going to work together. Among the Lower Lamet I heard it decidedly stated that it was not a good thing to have only one clan on a swidden, any more than in a village. By way of illustration, I can only contribute material gathered in a single village, that of Mokala Panghay.

From the table on the next page we gather that where several families co-operate, they are not members of one and the same clan. In regard to kinship, we need not emphasize the point to any degree, since all the members of the village are more or less related to one another through intermarriage. Rather we should take notice of the fact that families of somewhat equal age join together, and widows or older people are helped by or co-operate with sisters and brothers and daughters.

Swidden groups in Mokala Panghay.

The Roman numerals refer to the map in fig. 8 and table No. 5 which describe Mokala Panghay. The clans of the house groups are within parentheses.

Swidden groups:

Remarks:

One group of 1 family:

XI (*mpōl*) = *xəmiā*'s house.

One group of 2 families:

IV 4 and family (*čæit-A*) and XVIII (*mpōl*):

The housefathers are of equal age and declare that they have always been good friends. IV 4 is the son of *Tapia*, one of the more powerful men of the village. It is his intention to separate from house group IV, taking his family along.

Three groups of 3 families:

II (*mpōl*), III (*tav*) and V 1 (*čæit-B*):

V 1 is the oldest man in the village. He is 80 years old and lives alone in a cottage. His daughter is the wife of III 1, and she looks after him and helps him. However, the old man is quite healthy and works as much as he can. He does not want to remain in the village while the others work on the clearing.

X (*mpōl*), XIV (*čæit-B*) and XII (*čæit-B*):

The housefathers in XIV and XII are brothers. X 1 is brother-in-law to them.

XXI (*čæit-A*), XVII (*čæit-B*) and XX (*tav*):

XX 1 is a widow and sister to the housefather in XVII.

Two groups of 5 families:

I (*pōš*), VI (*čæit-B*), XVI (*mpōl*), IX (*čæit-B*), VII (*pōš*):

I 1 and VII 1 are sister and brother, VII 1 is a widow. IX 3 plus family have their own swidden within the group.

XV (*mpól*), IV (*éait-A*), XIII (*éait-A*), XIX (*éait-B*), VIII (*éait-B*): IV 1 and XIII 1 are brothers. VIII 1 is married to IV 1's daughter. XV 2's ortho-cousins (daughters of his father's brother) married to IV 1 (one is dead). XIX 1 is related to XV 2's mother.

Clearing the Forest

When the families have come to a decision about which land is to be cleared and which families are going to work together, the chopping and clearing of the land can begin. First, all the implements, i. e., chopping knives and axes, must be seen to. These iron implements, which the Lamet are naturally dependent on to the utmost, must be repaired and sharpened, and since the steel in these iron tools is fairly soft, it wears fast. Therefore the Lamet constantly buy new tools, and it is a regular occurrence that Lao smiths come up to the villages just at this time of year in order to sell these implements. This is just when the harvest has been gathered and the chopping has not yet started, and at this time the Lamet have plenty of rice and other products which they can exchange for the indispensable tools needed.

The smithy is now put in order, and grindstones are brought forth, but before the smithy can be used, a sacrifice to its spirit must be made. Betel nuts, a little salt and one egg are used for sacrifice here. Besides, a *talē* is fastened to the pump (*xəl'ūt*), and one says:

phi xəl'ūt pū plē, pū plūh, pū ntam mō plē, plō mit, kah an lōk, va'əkah həgvəh

"Spirit of the pump, eat fruits (betelnuts), eat salt, eat one egg, see that the chopping knives, see that the knives, see that they are right. Don't let them be jagged."

Both men and women, in fact all that have the strength to participate in the timber cutting, help with it. As soon as the first meal of the day is eaten, shortly after sunrise, the men of the village make up their food sacks. The rice containers are filled with the day's ration of newly cooked rice and bits of dried meat, red pepper, salt and possibly some other food are wrapped up in small banana leaf packages and stopped into cloth bags, which always accompany a Lamet on his wanderings. And then the men set out for the woods. The women remain a little longer in the village in order to see to the animals, and then they too go out.

They begin by chopping down at the lowest point on the slope, and then work upwards. Smaller trees do not need to be chopped clear through, since the larger trees drag the smaller ones along as they fall. The largest trees are hewn only partially, perhaps halfway, and when a part of them is destroyed by fire, they fall of their own accord.

It is chiefly the men that do the heavy timber cutting. As a matter of fact, they have nothing else to do at this time than just this work. On the other hand, the women are to some extent occupied with work that must be done in the village. There is rice to be husked, and food to be prepared, water to be fetched, and young children to be looked after, and their time is therefore more or less limited. However, the unmarried women work in the woods just as long as the men.

In this connection there is a certain division of work between men and women. The men take the heavier and more troublesome trees in hand, while the women see to those that are smaller, and particularly all the bamboo. But because of this we need not think that the women are much weaker than the men. They can handle an axe and a chopping knife just as well as the men, or nearly so. And they have constant practice with these tools, for it is the women who chop the supply of firewood for the homes.

As the larger trees drag the smaller along in their fall, the workers move gradually up the slope.

It takes two or three months to clear a swidden, and as a rule the cutting is not ready until the warm season begins, i. e., the middle of March. Then the hewn forest can lie and dry in the warm weather, and it is soon dry enough for burning. The forest which is still growing, however, is so damp that fire cannot destroy it.

As a rule no man power outside of the family or swidden group is used. If one family should complete its work before another, it helps the latter. They keep track of the number of workdays put out in help of this kind, and these are repaid later on in the form of the same number of workdays. In this way things are evened up, and the process of clearing thus becomes proportionate to the working capacity of a family. The payment for help in this work can also be made in the form of rice.

Burning the Forest

When the swidden is ready for burning, a sacrifice is first made to the ghost of fire. A few *talā* are placed at the boundary of the swidden, and sacrifice is made to *ši-ēp yæl* (ghost of fire). "In former times this had been

an old man who remained alone in the village when the others were out working on the swidden. The village had caught fire, and the old man was unable to escape and was burned up. After death he became a ghost of fire." An egg is sacrificed to him, and one says:

*śi-ēp gæl, vat'akah gæl leh kah gæl pūi ntē mā, piugnōg pūi seṅgul,
vat'akām xapās, śi-ēp gæl, śi-ēp pog*

"Ghost of fire, don't let the fire die, let the fire eat the dry hewn trees. Eat the logs, eat the stubs, don't jump over *xapās*."¹⁾

The sacrifice is made to the ghost of fire above the swidden on the *xapās*.

Then fires are started at different points simultaneously, and thus the swidden begins to burn.

At this time nearly all the swiddens in not only the Lamet district, but wherever there are swidden-using tribes in the whole of northern Indochina's mountain tracts, are burned. One can hear rattling, snapping and crackling going on in the burning swiddens, and everywhere the smell of smoke is in the air. The smoke hangs about also. The tongues of flame rise up toward the heavens, and the clouds of smoke reach even higher, black and heavy, and shroud the whole neighborhood in a blue-grey haze. The contours of the mountains dissolve more and more into a kind of mystic shadow behind this veil of smoke. At nighttime it becomes a grand spectacle, with all these fires burning high up in the mountains. It seems as if the mountains have opened up and released some evil spirits. The flames leap about in the darkness at the tops of the mountains, and it is easy to understand that the Lamet see in them some kind of a ghost.

When the fires have consumed all that it is intended that they shall, the swiddens lie black and dreary, filled with charred stumps, branches, and fallen trees, all in a jumble. The people gather up the worst of it into a pile and burn it, first taking the heavier logs to use as boundary marks for the private land of each family within the swidden. Besides, the greater part of the tract is enclosed with the fallen trees, and sometimes even strong fences are made, to prevent the buffaloes and other stray animals from getting in when the rice begins to sprout. When the swidden is completely burned, one has only to await the coming of the first rains in order to begin sowing. There is no particular working of the soil. The stubs and some of the larger logs are allowed to lie where they are.

¹⁾ *xapās* = a space chopped away around the swidden for preventing fire from spreading.

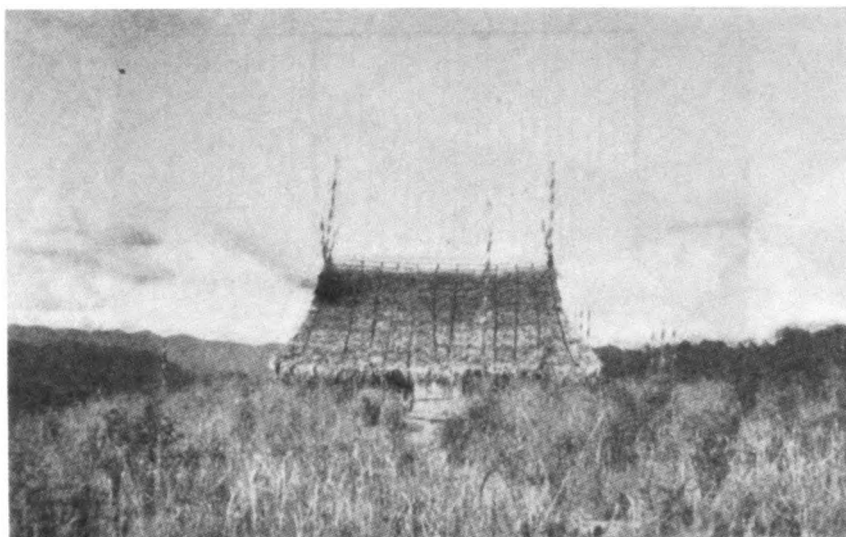


Fig. 100. Tapia's watch house.

At the end of May it becomes warmer and warmer, and soon heavy, black clouds begin to climb up behind the mountain ridges on the horizon. The clouds become blacker and larger, and one day the first rain falls with a crash and a roar onto the mountains of the Lamet. The time for sowing has now arrived.

But before it can begin, watch houses must be built on the swiddens, and moreover, sacrifices must be made to the various spirits which are connected with agriculture.

Watch Houses

When all the swiddens are burned thoroughly, and the fires have been quenched by the first showers, the dividing up of the swidden which a family group has in common takes place. The house groups had already decided in advance, before the timber cutting took place, which section each should have, and now when the burning is done, it is only a matter of setting out boundary marks where they are needed. If there is a good natural boundary mark, a river or the like, nothing else is necessary. In those places where these natural marks are absent, a log or two are laid out to mark the line between the tracts belonging to the various families. When this is completed the building of watch houses on the swiddens is begun.

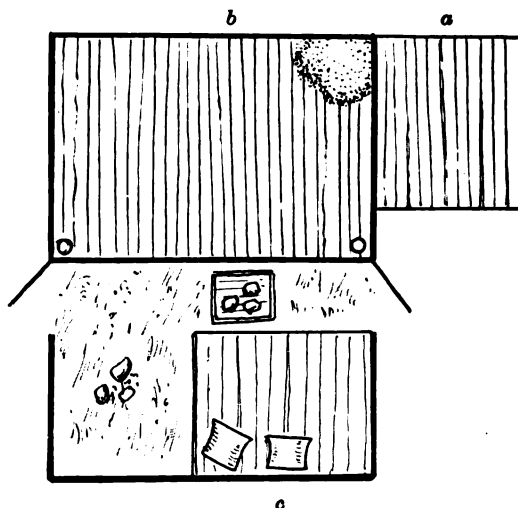


Fig. 101. Plan of a house on a Lower Lamet swidden. Raised floors of bamboo are seen on both sides of the passage running between the two entrances on the length of the house. a = threshing veranda. b = temporary storing place for the newly harvested rice; a heap of rice is seen to the right, and the two small circles below indicate sacrifice baskets to *kīpū gō*. c = sleeping apartment and where visitors are received; the two squares indicate bronze drums. The kitchen hearth is to the left of c, and above, another hearth with a drying rack.

These are intended for living in during the time that the rice is growing. As already mentioned, the people move away from the villages to the swiddens. The material for these huts is taken from the watch houses used the previous year. These are taken apart and transported in sections to the new swidden. If new details are to be added, this is done now.

The watch houses are rather simple constructions, standing directly on the ground, that is to say, they are not built on piles.

Some of the Lamet swidden huts provide hardly more than a roof, under which a bunk is built. On the other hand, more trouble has been taken in regard to some others, especially among the Lower Lamet, where whole families move out to the swidden and live there a decidedly longer time than the Upper Lamet live on theirs. Fig. 25 a shows the plan of a watch house of the Upper Lamet. Theirs are about 5 meters long and 3-4 meters wide. There are entrances under both gables, which are connected on the earth floor, or more correctly, form a passage. On one side of this the ground is covered with a floor of split bamboo, built like a bunk

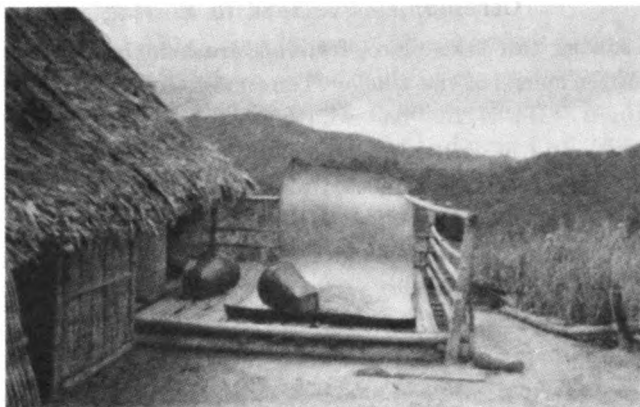


Fig. 102. The threshing floor. Lower Lamet.

a couple of decimeters above the surface of the earth. In the passage there is room for a hearth, above which a drying rack is usually hung, and on the bamboo floor the newly harvested rice can be kept, in the space not needed as a sleeping place for those who remain on the clearing.

The watch houses of the Lower Lamet are considerably larger, about 8 meters long and 5-6 meters wide. There the entrances are placed on the length of the house, and on both sides of the passage running between them there are raised floors of bamboo. In a special partition there is a hearth, where cooking is done, and in the central passage there is yet another hearth where the men sit in order to keep warm, or to roast meat or fish. The drying rack hangs above this hearth. Just outside this watch house and connected with it, there is a sort of veranda (fig. 102), on which the rice is sometimes threshed.

There are watch houses of very simple construction even among the Lower Lamet. But these are not intended for living in, but are used only as temporary storage places for crops.

There are also sacrifice bowls and a number of magical details to be seen in the watch houses, but I shall give an account of these in connection with the agricultural rites.

The Lower Lamet, who even take some of their domestic animals along when they move out on the swidden, build a separate pigsty near the watch house. Rice mortars are taken along also, and are placed just outside the house. Chickens are kept under the bamboo floor.

Ceremonies Previous to Sowing

Before sowing can take place, festivals are held in all Lamet villages in honor of the spirits of the village. The time for this ceremony is decided by the *xəmiā*. He is the one who chooses a day which he considers to be "good," and he is the one who leads the whole ceremony for these important spirits, who are connected with the welfare of the whole village.

The most important of the spirits is *mbrög yig*, the spirit of the village, who is supposed to live in the village itself, and is particularly concentrated in the spot beneath the *čog yig*. The other spirit is that of the *čog* itself. Moreover, the water spirit is sacrificed to at the stream where the Lamet fetch their drinking water; likewise with the spirit of the village entrance, and *phi yakün*, whose shrine stands just outside the inner village entrance. Sacrifice to all of the spirits mentioned takes place on the same day, and the descriptions which now follow concern only the Lower Lamet, and the prayer formulas are taken from Mokala Panghay.

The morning of the festival begins with the putting in order of all the objects made of wood or bamboo, which are to be used for the sacrifices: *kmul*, a sort of decorated plate of bamboo about 10 cm. long, which represents silver coin. This is an imitation of the silver billets which in olden times were used as coin in these regions. Then the equipment for the sacrifice poles is renewed. The latter are provided with long bamboo rods, which are cut at the joints into strips in such a way that these form a kind of tassel (*sün*). These rods are tied to the altars. Moreover, a wooden sword is fastened to each pole, as well as a *talē* and sacrificial bowls of bamboo and tassels of bamboo chips, and things which symbolize money. The equipment of the poles is renewed with each sacrifice, but this concerns only the outer poles, which are intended for *mbrög yig*. The sacrifice poles within the *čog* do not need to be supplied with new equipment. At least, the old objects are never removed. Thus when the sacrifice poles are in order, the Lamet go home and eat.

When this is done, the sacrificial festival can begin. Boys begin beating on the big village drum and on gongs in order to call forth the spirits of the village, and the men file in procession to the altar of *phi yakün* with the priest in the lead carrying the gifts of sacrifice, and the *lem* following next, and last of all the common people. Women and children are not allowed to take part in this. First of all some bits of betel are sacrificed at the altar, and then a pig and a hen are slaughtered there. After that the pig's blood is sacrificed. When this is done, the pig and the hen are taken to the *čog* and prepared for eating. The hen

is cooked, and *plā* is made of the pig's meat, which is finely chopped meat mixed with aromatic plants, and *tū*, soup. The sacrifices to *phi yakūn* are made simultaneously with those to the spirit of water, *mbrōg ōm*, and the spirit of the entrance (*mbrōg cæg*). These are performed by the son of the priest. Some years ago, before the boy had grown up, this sacrificial duty was performed by the village chief, since he was stepson and nephew to the priest. A hen is sacrificed to the spirit of water, as well as an egg and a little wine and brandy, and a pole is raised there.

When the pig and the hen are ready for eating, portions of the various dishes are borne also to *phi yakūn*, who gets a little brandy and wine as well. After this, all return to the *čog* where the wooden money is distributed, and following this a dog is slaughtered for the spirit of the village entrance, and the skull of the animal is fastened to a *talā* on the upper part of the entrance. This concerns only the entrance which stands on the south side of the village, near the altar of *phi yakūn*. The path that goes from this entrance is namely that which a few hundred meters farther on joins the path leading to the other villages.

Then the priest goes to the sacrifice poles outside the *čog*, and performs the rites for the village spirit himself, *mbrōg yig*. He fills the sacrifice bowls with a little of the prepared food as well as a little wine and brandy, and binds some coin symbols there. Moreover, he smears the blood of the sacrificed pig on the stones at the foot of the poles.

While the *xamiā* is occupied with the sacrifices for *mbrōg yig*, the representatives for each house group sacrifice a little brandy and wine and coin symbols at the sacrifice poles within the *čog*, intended for *mbrōg čog*. When they are through with this, all the men enter the *čog yig*, where they partake of the rest of the pig, the hen, and all the wine and brandy. They continue all day and all night with this feast, for they have got together a lot of food and intoxicating liquor. For twenty days following this feast they are not allowed to work outside of the village grounds, and on the twentieth day the priest sacrifices still another pig to the village spirit. On the day that this sacrifice takes place, the village drum is beat upon continually.

Before this festival commences, all the paths leading to the village are closed off, so that no stranger can enter and no one can leave it. Along all the roads leading in, and on all the paths, *talā* are set out as a protection against the intrusion of evil spirits. The Lamet declare that the spirits are afraid of *talā*, especially if there is a little pig's blood smeared on it.

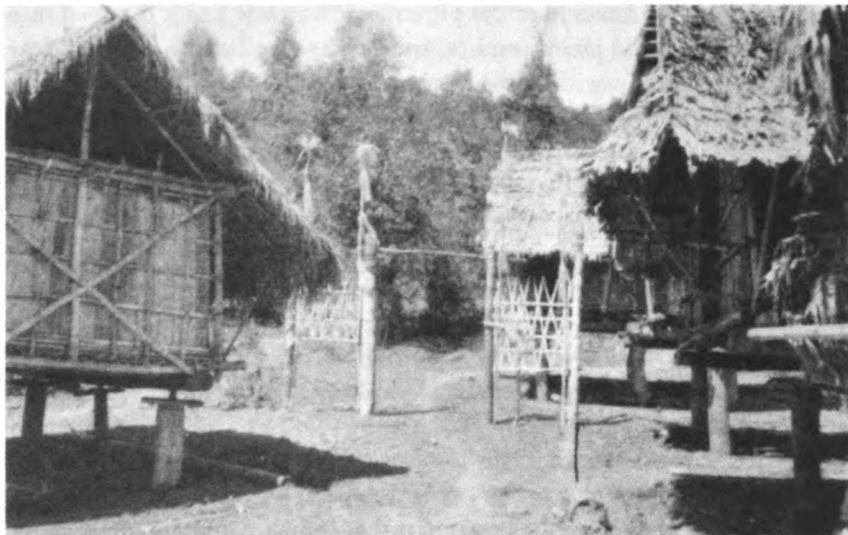


Fig. 103. A gate is erected in Ban Xang at the festival previous to sowing. No strangers are allowed to enter the village. In the foreground barns.

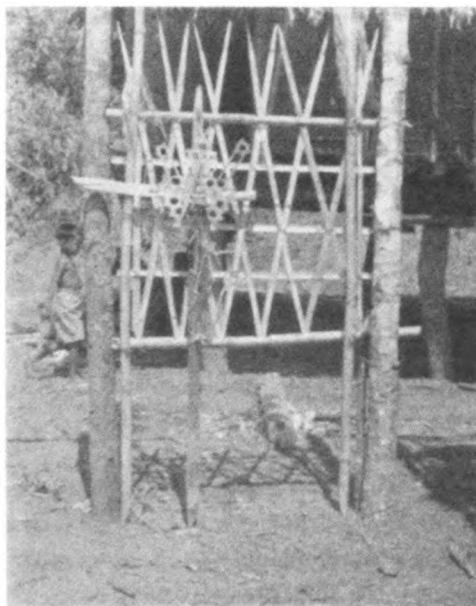


Fig. 104. Detail of the gate in fig. 103. Observe the *talā*, the wooden sword and the crossed bamboo spears that protect against the intrusion of evil spirits.

Formula for phi yakūn:

In Mokahang Tai he is called *chau kēu* (Laotic words) = the stranger.
kēu = the Laotic word for an Annamese.

rēu phi yakūn ō kah⁽¹⁾ yē lōk gōt⁽²⁾ lōk it lōk
 Sacrifice (to) *phi yakūn*, oh, give them well, feel well, sleep well,
som lōk pū lōk vōk mār vōk prī lōk⁽³⁾
 eat well, eat rice (cooked) well, go (to the) swidden, go forest well.
kah ō lekūn kah ō hrkiāk⁽⁴⁾ sāk ūp n'ēm plūh
 Give me riches, give me strength, sate rice (cooked), tasty (food), salt,
pēn gō kah ō pēn⁽⁵⁾ klō pēn lepag kah ō pēn
 get paddy, give me to get bronze drums, get gongs, give that I get
nē lōk pēn trāk pēn mpū
 wife good, get buffalo, get cows.

- (1) *kah* = give, but also "may," or "see that."
 (2) *gōt* = to feel, or to sit.
 (3) *lōk* In this connection it means good health. "I feel well" is translated *ō gōt lōk* = I find myself well.
 (4) *hrkiāk* = strength, courage, badness. The Lamet consider rich men to be mean. This word means everything that can be summed up in psychic strength, courage and badness. To a certain degree it can be compared with the quality of hardness, which a man with *mana* possesses. However, there is no ceremony for in any way transferring this, at least not as far as I know, nor for increasing it, otherwise than by prayer. *hrkiāk* only indicates this quality, and therefore it does not cover the word *mana* completely. The difference might be expressed by saying that one can have *mana*, but that one can be *hrkiāk*.
 (5) *pēn* = means both "become" and "get."

Free translation:

"I sacrifice to the *yakūn* spirit (perhaps *phyā* = Siamese title of nobility, in which case *kūn* is the name). Oh! see that they feel well, sleep well, eat well (food in general), eat (rice) well, go to the swidden, go to the forest well (feeling well). Let me get wealth, let me have strength, satisfy myself (with rice), have tasty food, salt, have paddy. May I get bronze drums, may my wife remain healthy, may I get buffalo, may I get cows."

Formula for the spirit of the water:

To the spirit of water, a hen, an egg, brandy and wine are sacrificed. At the same time a long bamboo rod is set up, at the top of which a three-cornered plaited piece is fastened.

One says:

rēu òm rēu tā lā mpēt

Sacrifice (to) water (spirit), sacrifice (to) father's father. Give brandy,

lā ntōl kah n'ēm kah sēn kah kuŋ

give yeast. Give tasty, give rich flow, give plenty!

Free translation:

"I sacrifice to the spirit of water, sacrifice to grandfather water. I give brandy, I give yeast. Give us tasty food, give us a rich flow, give us plenty of water!"

Formula for the spirit of the village:

semōl mī plō phi pōh lā prierr yig

Sowing thy do spirit renew. Sacrifice (to) spirit (of death) (of the) village,

lā n'ā kah lōk kah lōk šalæg semōl gō

sacrifice house give well. Give well good sprouting (of) sown paddy,

semōl ūp kah im kah kəh yām

sown rice (food). Give sprout, give growth (lift, rise). The sound (of)

ōm-rū ōm-selēh prī puōr viŋ ræt hār ræt yah

rain rain water, at sunset return pour water (over) *hār*, water *yah*.

gō im gō kəh gō ləh gō ləŋ

Paddy sprout, paddy grow, paddy big, paddy high.

yām sim hōk

The sound (screech) (of) birds hide (we the rice).

yām prōk kūm

The sound (screech) (of) squirrels fill (we the hole with earth).

yām mūk kəlhai

The sound (screech) (of) the crickets stop (we the hole with earth).

yām *rāi* *ntuug*
The sound (screech) (of) *rāi* (an animal) stamp (we the hole with earth).

kərnum *log* *tōh* *lūr* *tōh*
Thunder direction go up (= east) buds come up.¹⁾

kərnum mbləh
Thunder open (eyes),

prklik npium
lightning close (eyes).

tak *śargul*
(Let the rice) fasten to (stick to) the stubs.

tak *puḡnōḡ* *īm*
(Let the rice) fasten to (stick to) the logs. Sprout.²⁾

Free translation:

"Thy sowing makes the spirit to renew. I sacrifice to the spirit of the village, I sacrifice so that you give the family (house group) good health. Let the sown paddy, the sown rice sprout well.

"Make it sprout, make it grow. With the sound of precipitation (in general) and the rain, we come back at the sunset to pour water over *hār*, to pour water over *yah*.

"Paddy sprout, paddy grow, let it be big and high paddy. At the sound of the birds we hide (the grain).

» » » » » squirrels we fill (the hole where the rice is laid).

» » » » » crickets we push (down the rice).

» » » » » *rāi* we stamp (on the hole).

When it thunders in the east, buds begin.

When it thunders we open our eyes, when there is lightning we close them.

Let the rice stick fast to the stubs (on the swidden).

Let the rice stick fast to the logs (on the swidden).

Sprout!"

¹⁾ This is not quite clear. The Lamet say that when it thunders in the east, it rains in the west, where everything begins to bud.

²⁾ The stubs and logs on the swidden which survive the devastation of the forest are supposed to contain the essence of spirits. They want the rice to stick fast to these in order to grow well.

Sacrifice formula for the spirit of the village entrance at sowing time:

prierr mbrōy⁽¹⁾ *čæg tūh kæk tūh pū kæk ēr kæk šo*
 Spirit (of the) gate, come eat, come eat, eat cock, eat dog.
phi kah gom-gōu⁽²⁾ *val'ə le' ti yig ò poh yig*
 Spirit, give *gom-gōu* let not entrance to village. I renew village.
prierr yōr⁽³⁾ *val'ə lek ti yig tūlōy mbōy-sai*⁽⁴⁾ *kū čo*
 Spirit ours let not go down to village, forbid *mbōy-sai* not tear apart,
kū čæk šī-ēp⁽⁵⁾ *šī-oy pri-oy-kšay*⁽⁶⁾ *val'ə lak*
 not rip up, watersnake's spirit, *šī-oy*, the ghost of the elephant not break
muŋ mā val'ə pā muŋ-kūm⁽⁸⁾ *ò poh yig ò*
 circle (of) *panji*,⁽⁷⁾ not go beyond boundary's fence. I renew village, I
poh n'ā
 renew houses.

kah yē vig lək vək tūh čēm i čēm kun kən
 Let them return well. Go come each person, each old person. Children
pe' yū yām kah lək vig lək vək tūh
 small let not cry, let well return, well go come.

- (1) Both *prierr* and *mbrōy* are used here.
- (2) This is a spirit whose character I could not get an explanation of.
- (3) I do not know if it is a question of a spirit with the name *yōr*. *yōr* can also mean "our." *li'* and *le'* appear in the expression *val'ə trli'* *trle'* = do not run in and out! Do not go up and down in the houses.
- (4) *mbōy-sai* = a kind of black magic. At first the Lamet did not want to tell what it was. They seemed to be embarrassed about it. It is used against persons one wishes to injure. A spell is repeated into a bamboo tube which is laid out in the woods. When the tube cracks the person aimed at dies. Sometimes fishbones or similar things are sent out, which get into the entrails. "It comes flying through the air and one can hear it singing as it goes by," one of my informers told me. Unfortunately they are exceedingly secretive about all these things, and I could get no further information on the subject of black magic. However they are very much afraid of it.
- (5) *šī-ēp* = a kind of phantom. The watersnake is evidently a *nāga*.
- (6) *pri-oy-kšay* = the elephant spirit is particularly feared. Certain medicine men were specialists in healing those made ill by this spirit. *pri* = *phi*, Laotic word for spirit. *kšay* = elephant.

- (7) *panji*, a kind of pointed splinter one decimeter in length, which is placed on the paths in wartime, in order to prick the feet of the enemy. It can also mean a bamboo spear of one meter's length placed at the entrance of the village. These protect against evil spirits.
- (8) The village gate is extended on both sides with a little fence. In olden times the whole village was supplied with such a fence, which had sharpened bamboo points facing outwards.

Free translation:

"Spirit of the gate, come and eat rice, eat the cock, eat the dog! Oh, spirit, don't let *gom-gōu* come into the village. I renew the village. Don't let *prierr yōr* run away from the village (or, our *prierr* leave the village). Forbid black magic, don't let (them?) tear apart, rip apart (our clothes). Don't let the spirit of the watersnake, the *ši-ɔg* ghost and the elephant ghost break the small spears at the village boundary, don't let them climb over the fence on the boundary of the village. I shall renew the village, renew the houses. Give them a good return, every person going and coming, every old person. May the little children not cry. Give them a safe return, going and coming!"

The last phrase reappears in a number of formulas. The Lamet explain its meaning as corresponding to "may all their activities go well."

Formula for the spirit of the éog:

mbrōg yig mbrōg n'ā tūh kæk⁽¹⁾ tūh pū poh yig
 Spirit village, spirit house, come eat, come eat, renew village,
poh n'ā kah vig lək kah vək tūh cēm i cēm
 renew house. Give return well, give going, coming every person, every
kuən cēm n'ā cēm kṛu cēm tō⁽¹⁾ cēm
 old person, every family (house), every possession, every man, every
lem⁽²⁾ cau lak cau tō⁽⁴⁾ tūh pū tūh sɔm⁽²⁾
lem. Lord sacrifice pole, Lord sacrifice pole, come eat, come eat,
rəgsā rəgsom⁽²⁾ kən⁽⁷⁾ yig, kən n'ā haɣ⁽²⁾ kai va'ə tak
 protect people village, people house; feathers cock not fall off,
haɣ nək yā hulən
 feathers birds not fall off.

- (1) *kæk* = eat, or bite, meat.
- (2) *tō* = an ordinary man who is not a *lem*.
- (3) *lem* = the rich men.
- (4) The underlined words are in Laotic, and are included in Laotic prayers to the spirit of the village.
- (5) *som* = to eat, in regard to food in general.
- (6) *rəḡḡā rəḡsom* = comes from the Laotic *hak som*, *hak sa*.
- (7) *kən* = in Laotic, *people*, in Lamet, *children*.
- (8) The Lamet explain that here the tail feathers are really meant. The cocks used for sacrifice must have fine quills in their tails, otherwise they are not suitable.

Free translation:

“Village spirit, house spirit, come and eat! Renew the village, renew the houses. Let coming and going be good (i. e., their going back and forth to the swiddens or the woods) for every person, every old person, every family, every possession, every commoner, every *lem*. Lord sacrifice pole, Lord sacrifice pole, come and eat, come and eat. Protect the people of the village, protect the children in the families. Do not let the (tail-) feathers of the cock fall off, do not let the feathers of the birds fall off!”

Sowing

When the feasting for the village spirits is over, the *xəmiā* looks up another “good” day, on which the sowing can begin. But before the sowing can take place, various ceremonies must be performed. These commence on the evening previous to the day chosen for the sowing. Two conceptions make their appearance at these ceremonies, *hār* and *yah*. *hār* is a tree which is regarded as sacred. Unfortunately I have not succeeded in determining the Latin name of this tree. *hār* is to some degree looked upon as a kind of spirit, without belonging to any of the categories we know as *phi*, *mbrōḡ*, *prierr* and *śī*. The Lamet emphasize this. On the contrary, it is treated as a sort of personified spirit. It is possible that this can have some connection with a particular quality belonging to the tree. Further explanations for *hār* are forthcoming in connection with the texts. *yah* is a sacred space around the watch house, where the first sowing is done. The seed sown here is taken from all kinds of rice — no other cultivated plant — which the Lamet are in the habit of using. The

sowing ceremonies of the Upper and Lower Lamet are somewhat different, and therefore I shall cite an example from each district.

The sowing ceremonies in Mokala Panghay (Lower Lamet) proceed in the following way. On the evening before the sowing is to begin, a little house or a shrine is built and placed on the ground just outside the dwelling in front of the veranda. This house is a shrine to *hār* and is called *n'ā hār*. A little sowing is then done around this house, but only husks are placed in the holes. Children perform this rite. Then water is sprinkled over the earth that is sown, and an egg or a little hen is sacrificed to *hār*. Among the Lower Lamet, a man performs this last ceremony, and not a woman, as is the case with the Upper. When the hen is sacrificed, one says:

pāk n'ā hār . pə-krah¹) tū pə-krah t'ig el kū
 Stick blood house *hār*, let fall hand, let fall foot, not not have
mbrah el kū mbrah kah gō im kah gō kəh kah
 bad luck, not not have bad luck. May rice sprout, may rice grow, may
gō ləh kah ləg el kū hār el kū yah
 rice flower, may put forth fruit. Not not have *hār*, not not have *yah*.

Free translation:

"I stick blood on *hār*'s house. I let water fall on my hands, let water fall on my feet. Let me not have bad luck! Let me not have bad luck! May the rice sprout, grow, flower, and put forth fruit. Don't let it grow crooked. Let there be no failure of the crop."

The sowing itself commences on the following day, and this ceremony for *hār* is repeated early in the morning before the workers set out for the swidden. Out there again sacrifices are made to the various spirits. The spirit of fire, *ṣi-ēp gæl*, is the first.

¹) *pə-krah* = causative form of *krah*. *pə-* is a causative prefix. This custom of letting water fall on hands and feet in order to avoid bad luck, is a kind of magic which reappears in various connections. When a Lamet has offended the spirits, he takes a leaf from the roof of the house and goes down to a stream and throws it into the water, so that the leaf follows the current. He then washes his hands and feet. This is evidently a purification process. During the time of sowing, as well as at harvest time, all the implements are washed thoroughly, sowing-sticks, harvest baskets, and the like. This is done when the day's work is over. Possibly this also is a purification process or ceremony, through which contagion from spirits can be done away with. The sprinkling of water on the other hand, is another thing, which possibly has some connection with growth.

A sacrifice bowl is made from a bamboo tube, and this is fastened onto a rod which is placed on the swidden. The entrails of a hen are placed in this bowl, and then bits of cloth from torn clothes are laid together and burned. Then all the objects of sacrifice are thrown up into the air, and the following is chanted:

prăś *śi-ēp gæl* *śi-ēp pog* *val'ə* *rug*
 Throw up into the air.¹⁾ Fire ghost, ash ghost, may not burn up,
val'ə *vel* *gǝ-up* *kah* *gǝ* *im* *kəh* *ləh* *læg*
 may not dry up rice. Let rice sprout, grow, flower, put forth fruit.

Free translation:

"I throw the sacrifice into the air. Fire ghost, ash ghost, you shall not burn up, you shall not dry up the rice. Let the rice sprout, grow, flower, bear fruit!"

Next, a sacrifice is made to *phi cōm*. This is the spirit of the swidden, and he, like the other spirits is invited to come and eat, but the Lamet are afraid of him, and want him to vanish afterwards. If the spirit remains on the swidden, it is not a good thing, for then the rice will not grow. *phi cōm* is also called *prierr cōm*. A dog is sacrificed to him, the skull of which is hung on his altar. When the sacrifice is performed, these words are said to him:

reh, *reh*⁽¹⁾ *mbrōg nār*⁽²⁾ *mbrōg tār*⁽³⁾ *mbrōg* *mār*
 Arise, arise, *mbrōg nār*, *mbrōg tār*, spirit (of the) swidden,
mbrōg pri *reh* *kæk* *reh* *pū* *śo* *tag* *ō* *mār* *ō*
 spirit forest, arise bite, arise eat dog singed⁽⁴⁾ mine swidden mine
pri *əh* *śemǝl* *empog* *ēr* *tag* *ō* *mār* *ō*
 forest. Take sowing-stick⁽⁵⁾ fill hole. Cock singed⁽⁴⁾ mine swidden mine
pri *əh* *śemǝl* *empog* *śekē* *śo* *kæk* *ēr*
 forest. Take sowing-stick fill hole. Forbidden dog, eat (bite) cock,
śekē *ēr* *kæk* *śo*. *mbrōg raag-um*⁽⁶⁾ *pernum lōr*⁽⁷⁾ *mbrōg kēlug*⁽⁸⁾
 forbidden cock, bite dog. Spirit stone fast, *pernum lōr*, spirit *kēlug*,
mbrōg rugśat⁽⁹⁾ *reh* *kæk*, *reh* *pū* *śo* *tag* *mār* *ēr* *tag*
 spirit *rugśat* arise bite, arise eat dog burned swidden, cock singed

¹⁾ The bowl containing the objects of sacrifice is thrown up into the air, with the idea that it shall follow along with the smoke and flames from the burning rags.

mār kah vig lək vək tuh kah gō im gō kəh gō
 swidden. Let return well. Go come, let the rice sprout, rice grow, rice
ləh gō læp va'ə tak va'ə tō gō tɪp. kah
 flower, rice bear fruit. Don't (you) stick fast, don't enter paddy rice. Let
gō im gō kəh gō ləh gō læp yām⁽¹⁰⁾
 paddy sprout, paddy grow, paddy flower, paddy bear fruit. Sound
ōm-rū ōm-sələh aaah
 of rain, rain water. Aaah!

- (1) "Arise!" Can also mean "come here!"
- (2) *nār* is a large tree, in which a spirit lives.
- (3) *tār* is also a tree, in which a spirit lives.
- (4) Singed or burned dog, cock or hen. Before being sacrificed these are roasted on the fire.
- (5) "I take and sow."
- (6) In that part of the mountain rock that sticks up of the ground, spirits are supposed to live.
- (7) A kind of pile round tree stumps. Ants build these, and spirits live there.
- (8) Sticks are thrust into the earth for hanging things on. Here also spirits dwell.
- (9) This refers to a very vigorous species of bamboo which grows in the valleys. A characteristic of this plant is that wilted twigs can be broken off and planted in the earth.
- (10) *yām* means sound, cry, shriek. Can be translated by "at the sound of, I sacrifice, etc."

Free translation:

"Arise, arise (to the heavens), the *nār* tree's spirit, *tār* tree's spirit, forest spirit, swidden spirit, arise and eat my roasted dog here in my swidden in the forest. I take my sowing-stick and fill the holes (with rice). (Eat) my roasted cock in my swidden in the forest. I take my sowing-stick and fill the holes with rice. If you are forbidden to eat the dog, eat the cock, if the cock is forbidden, eat the dog! Spirit, which lives in the mountain rock (sticking up from the earth). Spirit, which lives in the termite piles. Spirit, which lives in the sticks. Spirit, which lives in big bamboo. Arise (come here) and eat! Come here and eat the burned dog on the swidden, the burned cock on the swidden. Let returning be good, coming

and going. Let the rice sprout, grow, flower, bear fruit! You shall not stick fast, not enter into the rice. Let the rice sprout, grow, flower, bear fruit. (I sacrifice) at the sound of falling water (murmuring of streams, etc., dropping, rainwater). Aaah!"

The sowing is begun with *yah*, and in the evening when the sowing of this is ready, water is poured onto this bit of earth. Moreover, watering takes place every evening on the portion sown that day, and all the implements are carried into the watch house, where the owner takes a water container made from a gourd, and a few *hār* leaves and rinses the tools. When the *yah* is watered, the following is chanted:

rat hār rat yah tr-lit' (1) tr-lel' el kū hār
 Water *hār*, water *yah*, go in, go out, not not let grow crooked,
el kū yah æg nūm hum kūt el kū hār el kū yah
 not give failure not failure.
kah gō im, kah gō kæh gō læh gō læg gō
 Let the rice sprout, let the rice grow, rice flower, rice bear fruit, rice
muun kruug-selām gō muun tām semōk (2) yām
 like spear-rod, rice like hanging branches *semōk*. The sound (of)
šim hōk yām prōk kūm
 birds hide, the sound (of) squirrels fill.

- (1) *tr-* is a verb prefix, which means *to do something indefinitely*. In this case it stands in connection with the verbs meaning to go in and to go out of the houses. It refers to the fact that it is not desirable that the children run back and forth between the houses. It is so, that during the time of sowing, visiting between families is forbidden, and even conversation with others is not allowed. No stranger is allowed to enter the swidden as long as the sowing goes on, and this includes all who do not belong to the swidden group. The Lamet are particularly afraid of strangers and children that run back and forth bringing back spirit contagion. It is supposed that the spirits have the ability of fastening themselves to persons. In the case of death, and other ceremonies, means of protection against this spirit contagion make their appearance.
- (2) *semōk* is a clinging plant. Here it is meant that when the rice ripens, it shall be tall and long, and full of ripe grains, so that it bends like the branches of this plant.

Free translation:

This formula is difficult to translate exactly. It means something like this:

"I water *hār*, I water *yah*. (Even if) the children run back and forth a little, let there be no failure, let the rice sprout, grow, flower, and bear fruit, and be long like the rod of the spear, (with which I am sowing), and let the ripened rice bend like the branches of the *semōk* plant. At the cry of the birds we hide (the grain), at the cry of the squirrels we fill (the hole where the rice is laid)."

The Lamet are very much afraid that *hār* shall be the cause of crop failure, and therefore this spirit must not be disturbed in any way. If the rice does not grow normally, "grows crooked," it is called *hār*. By this is meant that *hār* has been the cause of it. When the rice sticks up from the earth, and then does not grow straight, the Lamet take a few *hār* leaves in one hand and a stick in the other, and they beat upon the stumps and logs in the swidden, or a branch of the *hār* tree is taken and dragged over the swidden. This performance is called *puut-hār*. It is done in order to help the rice sprout normally. At this time they say:

im gō el kū hār el kū yah

Sprout rice. Let it not grow crooked. Let there not be failure.

When sacrifice is made to the spirits in the swidden, a *čig černōk* is first made, which is a sacrifice bowl of bamboo standing on a base. One is made for each spirit.

When the sowing is completed, the housefather takes a few grains of rice, and laying them on the point of his spear, throws them up into the air. Each grain of rice represents one of the destructive animals that are in the habit of breaking into the swiddens, birds, rats, deer, wild pigs and monkeys. He does this as a means of denying them entrance into the swidden to eat up the rice sown there.

Among the Upper Lamet the sowing ceremonies take place as follows.

This material is gathered chiefly from the village of Mokahang Tai, and to a lesser degree from the villages of Lakhon, Sathon, Sithoun, and others.

The ceremony for *hār* is performed actually at night, just before the sowing is to begin. Everything in the village must be very quiet, in order not to disturb *hār*, for the slightest thing can be the cause of crop failure. Everyone excepting the mother of the house, i. e., the housefather's wife of first rank, must be asleep, for it is she who is to perform the sacrifice. For the occasion a small shrine is made, in the form of a little hut, or shed,

and is fastened to two sticks which are driven into the ground. This is called *n'ā hā*, *hā*'s house. Before sacrificing to *hā*, the mother of the house first goes to the altar of ancestors and sticks a little rice that has been dipped in the blood of a hen to the buffalo skull. It is possible that this is done with the intention of strengthening the ancestor spirits, so that they can be of assistance when the farming is done. When she performs this ceremony, she says:

tak gō ntōh tāk ntōh mpō, pāk šæg pāk
Stick rice (on) skull buffalo, (on) skull cow, sacrifice weights, sacrifice
kāu

precious stones.

The Lamet declare that this is done in order that the rice shall sprout and grow well. The mentioning of a cow's skull here is due to the fact that the Upper Lamet sometimes use zebu instead of buffaloes as sacrifices to the ancestor spirits. It is the poorer people who do this. The weights mentioned here are the Burmese weights used in many parts of Further India, and they are very beautifully modelled with an animal at the top. The animal represents a mythical animal, and has a certain magic and cosmologic meaning which we can not go into here. This meaning, however, is unknown to the Lamet. The weights are considered to be very valuable, and in olden times they were partly used as coins. They are made of a metal alloy which consists to some extent of copper.

The mother of the house then proceeds to *hā*'s house, which is set up near the steps of the dwelling, and sacrifices there a red hen and a few pinches of paddy. Afterwards she sows rice grains around *hā*'s house, and when she sacrifices she says:

pāk kmul pāk kəšəg ōkōi kənē
Sacrifice silver coin, sacrifice copper pieces. There is no sour fruits.

The silver coin and copper pieces are symbolized by small bamboo pieces and a kind of knot of bamboo strips. These are fastened to *n'ā hā*. *kənē* is a sour dish made of a kind of sour fruit, which *hā* does not like. When sacrifices to *hā* are made, one may not eat sour things, nor may one wash himself.

On the following day one can go out and begin sowing, but one is not allowed to converse with members of other families, nor to wear ornaments, for *hā* would not like that. In the same way, one may not sprinkle water on another person, nor may one eat meat. The sowing commences with a

woman making the first holes and sowing the entire *yah*. When this is done she says:

semɔl kũ hãː kũ yah kah ɣɔ̃ ɪm kæh xæh
 I sow seeds *hãː*, seeds *yah*. Let the paddy sprout, grow, flower,
xuul tak seɣuul tog tak puɣnɔ̃ɣ lɔː
 bear fruit. Fasten the stubs *tɔ̃ɣ*, fasten logs *lɔː*.

Free translation:

"I sow *hãː*'s seed, *yah*'s seed (or seed in *yah*), may the rice sprout, grow, flower and bear fruit. Stick fast to *tog*'s stumps and *lɔː*'s logs."

Tog and *lɔː* are some kind of spirit essence that live in the charred stumps and logs in the swidden. They have some connection with the growth of rice, and it is believed that the crop will fail if they are not sacrificed to.

When the mother of the house has completed the sowing of *yah*, she goes into the watch house and washes the implements used in the sowing. Now the others can do their part of the sowing. At sunset she goes once more to the *yah* and waters it, saying:

tɪ(1) ɔ̃m kah ɔ̃m kæp ɬæt hãː kũ hãː kũ yah tak
 water give water container, water *hãː* seed *hãː* seed *yah*. Fasten
seɣuul tog tak puɣnɔ̃ɣ lɔː ɪm kæh xæh xuul
 (to) stumps *tog*, fasten (to) logs *lɔː*. Sprout, grow, flower, bear fruit.
ɪm kũ ɣai ɪm kũ mũs val'ə kah mɪ ɬaɪt' val'ə kah mɪ vai
 Sprout seed eye, sprout seed nose,(2) not let you wither, not let you spoil
ɣɔ̃ val'ə kah mɪ mɔ̃m mɪ tan ɣɔ̃ɣ yah ketah mɪ
 paddy, not let you, mouth your, empty basket *yah*, hinder parts your
tan xəɣ hɔ̃ɣ
 spoil the basket (for steam cooking).

ɣɔ̃ nɬuup ɕag hãu ɣɔ̃
 Paddy bent stretch beyond climb over (mountains) paddy (from)
nɬau ɣɔ̃ puɣau ɕag kuup
 Nam Tha, paddy Nam Ngau stretch beyond unite.(3)

- (1) The preposition *tɪ* is not always easy to translate. It can mean towards, in, on, through, etc. It is difficult to use a word which can mean all this at once. We meet the same difficulty in several exotic languages

such as Chinese, where the particles cannot always be translated exactly by one word in European languages. In this case *tī* is connected with the verb *kah*, and can mean *distribute*, *spread*. For example, crossroads = *tī-kah*, to distribute rice = *tī-kah gǝ*. So the sentence above can mean: I spread water with the water container, or I spread the water container's water.

- (2) The eye of the seed = germ, sprout. Nose of the seed = root fibres, or the roots of the sprout.
- (3) They want the rice souls from the districts around the Nam Tha and Nam Ngau rivers to climb over the mountains and unite in their own swidden.

Free translation:

"I sprinkle water with the water container (the water container's water), and water *hāi*'s seed, *yah*'s seed (seed in *yah*).

"Stick to *log*'s stumps, stick to *lōi*'s logs. Sprout, grow, flower and bear fruit.

"May the eye of the seed develop, may the nose of the seed develop.

"You shall not wither away, you shall not spoil the rice, let not your mouth make an end of (the rice in) *yah*'s basket. Nor your hinder parts make an end of (the rice in) the basket (for steam cooking).

"The rice bent (with ripened fruit) stretches over and climbs (over the mountains) from Nam Tha, the paddy from Nam Ngau stretches over (the mountain) and is united (here)."

Before the other members of the family can begin sowing, the mother of the house must distribute the grain (*semǝl*) to each and every one that shall help with the job. This ceremony is called *tī-kah gǝ semǝl*. When a plot of land has been sown, it is sprinkled with water, and in the evening when the work for the day is done, all must wash their sowing-sticks and sowing-baskets.

When the sowing is completed, a few rice grains are mixed with bits of buffalo hide and placed in the middle of the swidden. If the raven partakes of this, the rice will grow well.

In Lakhon sacrifice is made twice a day during the sowing period to the spirit of the raven, so that the crop will succeed. Cooked rice and fermented fish are mixed together and thrown into the swidden, and the following is repeated:

tī tah⁽¹⁾ *lōkāl* *ap* *mī kah mā\ kē gō*
 To throw raven (cooked) rice thine, give swidden their paddy

nē ləg muŋ ləg mī
 (imperative particle) black like black you.⁽²⁾

- (1) *tī tah* = throw up, take and throw. Here we have a reappearance of that strange verb construction with *tī* = towards, in the direction of, in different directions, spread. It is possible that this particle has some connection with the prefix *tr-*, to do something in an indefinite way. Among the Lamet the prefix can be divided on the one hand into a consonant with a vocal murmur, and this consonant plus *m*, *n*, *l*, *r*, where the vocal murmur has been dropped.
- (2) They want the rice to be like the feathers of the raven. Black rice (*gō ləg*) is considered to be the best and most tasty. The Lamet never kill a raven, for they believe the bird to be invulnerable, and that the spirit of the raven protects against arrows.

Free translation:

"I take and throw to the raven thy rice. May the rice on their swiddens be black as thou art black!"

Those who perform the sowing are not allowed to wear a hat or a turban on the head, even if the sun's rays are strong, or if it is raining. No people other than those working on the swidden are allowed to come in. They are not allowed to sing, either, while the sowing is in process, for then the rice will not grow, and the eating of sour and bitter things is also forbidden.

The Upper Lamet perform sacrifices to three more spirits who live on the swidden.

One of these is called *tiao ndenti*. In Mokahang Tai they believe that this spirit is a youth dressed in white. He watches over the swidden, so that boars and other animals cannot enter and destroy the rice. Red and white cocks are sacrificed to him, and two persons are required to perform the ceremony. The shrine of this spirit is placed north of the swidden. It looks like a little roof-shed with a little frame below it on which the two boiled cocks are placed. Besides these, a hammer and an anvil made of bamboo are placed, and the blood of a hen is spattered on the altar.

The second spirit is called *xəmmā*. This lives in the watch house and seems also to appear as a white-clad youth. He protects against insects which eat the rice grains. However, no sacrifice is made to him until after

the sowing time, when the rice makes its first appearance above the surface of the ground. At this time a pig is killed, and a soup is prepared and placed on his altar. Moreover, pig's blood is spattered on the altar, and a further sacrifice of rice wine and a couple of small bottles of brandy is made.

The third spirit lives in the south part of the swidden. He is called *dəydaŋ*. Like the first one, he prevents monkeys and rats and other destructive animals from entering the swidden.

When all of the sowing is ready, the mother of the house takes a *kək*, that is, a thick piece of bamboo about 2 dm. in length, which has been fastened to one end of the sowing-stick, and splits it into four parts. She lays three of these on the ground outside of the watch house, and the fourth she drives into the ground. The space between the three pieces that lie on the ground symbolizes *yah*, and the pieces themselves symbolize wild pigs, bears and monkeys. She sprinkles water over everything and says:

lak kək kī lək kē-č'aləŋ kū mā. ək kək
 Split *kək*, internodium good. Give health seed swidden. Take *kək*.
va'ə kah pās ləi' ti mā. va'ə kah k.i.s ləi' ti mā.
 Don't let wild pigs enter in swidden Don't let bears enter in swidden.
va'ə kah [vā ləi' ti mā.
 Don't let monkeys enter in swidden.

Free translation:

"I split *kək*, the good bamboo piece. Give health to the grain (seed) of the swidden. Take *kək* and do not let wild pigs enter the swidden, do not let bears enter the swidden, do not let monkeys enter the swidden."

The purely technical method of procedure in sowing is very simple. The men first of all take a sowing-stick, or a lance to which a sowing-stick is fastened, and use it for making holes in the earth. The women follow them and lay from 3-5 grains of rice in each hole, and stamp on the hole with their heels. The rice is kept in baskets which they carry in front bound to the waist with a cord.

When the sowing is completed, several persons must remain on the swidden during the day, in order to guard them from birds, especially doves, who would otherwise come and eat up the grains. The birds are frightened away by means of stones shot from a pellet-bow, or they are

even shot at with a crossbow. The rice is now beginning to sprout and shoot up from the earth, and at the same time a number of other plants whose roots have survived the devastation of the burning, reappear above the earth. These must be cleared away, and it is the job of the women mostly to continually keep the place clear of weeds. These consist of different kinds of grass, wild bananas and rattan palms. This weeding is kept up as long as possible, i. e., until the rice has reached the stage when it begins to bear ears. After this only the larger plants, like rattan palm and bananas, are taken away.

When the rice has reached a height of about 20 cm., it is then about the middle of July, a second festival for the spirits of the village is held, and the same ceremonies, rites, and sacrifices as on the occasion of the first festival, are repeated.

Shortly after this festival, just about the time when the rice is ready to flower, sacrifice is made to the spirits that hover about the paths that lead to the swidden, partly at the crossroads, and partly at the boundary line of the swidden.

To a forest spirit called *rūmrum*, the sacrifice of a single wooden coin is made accompanied by the words:

rēu rūmrum mbrōm va'ə tak va'ə tō

Sacrifice *rūmrum* swidden's boundary. Don't stick fast, don't push into
mbrōg gō mbrōg up
 spirit paddy, spirit rice.

Free translation:

"I sacrifice to *rūmrum* at the boundary of the swidden. Don't stick fast, don't push into the paddy spirit, the rice spirit!"

The Lamet explain that by paddy spirit and rice spirit they really mean the soul of rice (*klpā gō*).

At road crossings sacrifice poles are set up, and these are of bamboo with split tufts or tassels. The Lower Lamet place the symbol of a rice basket filled with earth at the foot of these poles, in which the earth represents rice, and this is accompanied by a tiny model of a wine jug with a drinking tube. Moreover, a *talā* is fastened to the pole. The Upper Lamet

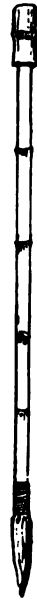


Fig. 105.
Sowing-stick
from Upper
Lamet.

raise similar poles and hang wooden coins on them. They also stop bits of pork and cooked rice in bamboo tubes, which they drive into the earth at the base of the poles. These bamboo tubes have been opened only a little on the side by cutting out a short tongue in the wall. The spirit at the crossroads is called *prierr nkah* among the Lower Lamet, and *phi to-kah* among the Upper. In the formulas repeated to this spirit, he is begged not to come into the swidden and devour the rice, and not to leave the forest.

At this time the Upper Lamet set up on the swidden a long bamboo rod (*taor*) with a three-cornered piece at the top (*mblji*). This is of plaited bamboo strips and is in the shape of an equilateral triangle. One side of it is hung with small wooden charms, and a couple of plaited birds sit in two of the corners. The Lower Lamet also set up something similar to this to the spirit of water, the spirit of the village and the ancestor spirits, when the roe clan perform sacrifices. On the other hand, I have never seen these bamboo rods on their swiddens. The Upper Lamet declare that these are set up in order to encourage the rice to grow as high as the bamboo rod.

When these ceremonies are over, it is necessary to guard the swiddens somewhat better. It often happens that deer and wild pigs push in and destroy the crop. Most of the families of the Lower Lamet move out to the swiddens at this juncture, and remain there in the watch houses right up to the time of bearing in the harvest. Among the Upper Lamet on the other hand, most of the members of the family remain in the village, while a few of the younger members spend the night in the watch houses. When the harvest is in full swing, then all who can, even among the Upper Lamet, move out to the swiddens. Only old people who are incapable of working, and very small children remain in the villages at this time.

In order to prevent the animals of the forest from getting in, traps are set all around the swidden. These are mostly spear-traps for larger game. But besides these, rather large traps for rats are placed where they usually make their way into the fields. However, boars are rather cunning, and they evidently learn how they can avoid the spear-traps. For this reason a certain part of the boundary of the swidden is protected with long strips of bamboo which are stretched around it. The Lamet say that when the wild pigs see these, they believe that they are part of a spear-trap, and do not dare to enter there.

The Upper Lamet have also other means for frightening away destructive animals. A kind of bell is made of thick bamboo tubes, and is hung

up here and there all over the swidden. Its clappers hang loose on the bell and strike with the smallest puff of wind. But the bells are also connected by means of long strings to a common "signal-station" on the swidden. This consists of a little seat, over which a roof has been placed. A woman sits here and pulls at all the strings so that the bells keep sounding. In one village there was a bell that was set in motion by means of water power.

Cultivated Plants

The Lamet cultivate chiefly rice, but a great many other plants as well. The rice that they sow is what is called mountain rice and glutinous rice, which can be raised without irrigation. They know of a number of different varieties of these kinds of rice. Each variety has a different name which indicates its color, whether it is an early variety or not, and possibly other qualities. The names of these varieties of rice vary also in the different districts. A difference is indicated between white, red and black rice. There is a very early variety of the white rice, and a later one. Only a little of the early varieties is raised, in order to get fresh rice as soon as possible. The Lamet are always afraid that the previous year's supply will not be sufficient. Moreover, the early varieties have the peculiarity of the rice easily dropping when it ripens. Therefore it must be harvested quickly, and for this reason they cannot cultivate any large quantities of this variety. Red rice is not cultivated to any extent, either. It has a good taste, to be sure, and it smells nice, but is eaten for the most by persons who have stomach trouble. What is called black rice is about the most important of all, and there are several varieties of this. It seems to be liked most generally, and according to the Lamet, it gives the best returns.

With the assistance of the Rice Institute in Hanoi, I was able to get the five commonest varieties of rice cultivated in Mokala Panghay determined. Four of these were species of glutinous rice, and one was of the so-called hard variety of rice. The Latin names follow:

- 1) hard rice: *Oryza sativa* L. subsp. *communis*
Prol. Japonica var. *Nero-vialonica*
 Gustchin (rapprochant du type *prol. indica* var. *mutica*);
- 2) glutinous rice with red husk: *Oryza sativa* L. susp. *communis* *Prol. Japonica* var. *Dubia* Korn;

- 3) glutinous rice with white husk: *Oryza sativa* L. *susp. communis* Prol. *Japonica* var. *brunneo punctata* Gustchin;
- 4) glutinous rice with bristles, white husk: *Oryza sativa* L. *susp. communis* Prol. *Japonica* var. *Alba* (Alef);
- 5) glutinous rice with deep-purple husk: *Oryza sativa* L. *susp. communis* G. Prol. *Japonica* var. à glumelles violettes, caryopse violet.

Besides rice, the Lamet raise other kinds of grain as well, such as *Eleusine*, *Coix* and millet (*Setaria italica*). These plants are usually grown in the outskirts of the rice fields, particularly along the paths near the swidden, and they are never sown in any great quantity. The Upper Lamet cultivate also a little maize, not right on the swidden, however, but near a watercourse. The maize is used only in the unripened stage. The ears are roasted in front of the open fire. Once or twice I have also seen a grass plant which the Lamet call *khaolan* growing only in the damper places on the swidden. This plant is about 3 meters high, and has seeds with a deep purple edge. The stem is nearly as sweet as sugar cane, and children can be seen sucking bits of this. It is possibly *Sorghum saccharatum*. However, all these kinds of grain are not used preferably as food, but rather in the manufacture of wine. Wine seems to get a better taste if made not of rice alone, but with these types of grain as well. An old woman told me that formerly a great deal more *Eleusine* was raised, and at that time they ate it often also. Sugar cane never came to my notice while among the Lamet, but it seems that a few villages raised it in small quantities.

Many different kinds of root crops are raised: taro, sweet potatoes, sweet manioc and yams.

Five kinds of taro are known, one of which is wild and the others cultivated. The wild kind grows in water pools. Only the leaf stems of this variety are eaten, which are cooked in water in the same way that asparagus is prepared. The roots of this wild plant are not suitable for eating, for if one should do so one gets the itch, or stomach ache, or sore throat, the Lamet tell me. I have not been able to get the four cultivated varieties determined.

In certain parts of the swidden there are small vegetable gardens, where the Lamet raise a kind of onion that grows in mats or turfs like chives. Here are to be seen also a number of vegetables, the leaves of which are

used in about the same way as spinach leaves. In other parts of the swidden small plots are sown with tobacco and above all red pepper of all varieties. This is the most important seasoning for the Lamet. Peanuts are planted in the paths on the swidden, and everywhere the long, dark green creepers of the cucumber branch out among all the rest of the vegetation. As early as August, and until well into December, an tremendous amount of cucumbers can be seen on the swidden. Besides, some other species of the cucumber family are raised, such as *Lagenaria*, which has a hard-shelled fruit that can be used as bottles, and further, a kind of red and green *Cucurbitaceae*, the fruit of which has sharp ridges.¹⁾ We should also add to this group a number of varieties of melon.

We often see small beds right near the watch house planted with such aromatic plants as citronella,²⁾ a couple of species of mint, and particularly a plant resembling camomile, which the Lamet call *luôt* (*Spilanthes Acmella*). This and mint are used raw and chopped, together with raw chopped meat.

There are several varieties of the eggplant-like *Solanaceae*, and these continue to bear fruit until long into the month of February. Furthermore, several kinds of beans are raised, which twine about props here and there on the swidden. Finally, ginger must be named as an herb of lesser importance.

Border plants of bright flowers are often seen along the paths, such as *Tagetes*, *Celosia* and cockscombs and other varieties the names of which I do not know. These flowers are used partly in sacrifices to the soul of rice, and partly by boys and girls for decorating the pierced lobes of their ears.

Long before the rice becomes ripe, several of the vegetable plants are ready for eating. This refers to corn, for example, and above all, cucum-



Fig. 106. Drying rack for red pepper.

¹⁾ *Luffa acutangula*, fruit with red edges. *Momordica Charantia*, knotty fruit; ripe 3 months after being sown.

²⁾ Citronella = *Cymbopogon Nardus*.



Fig. 107. A Lower Lamet watch house.

bers. Moreover, root crops play quite a part during the entire harvest season up to January in increasing the bill of fare. Not more of the precious rice than is absolutely necessary is consumed at this time. It is considered better to spare it until the other vegetables are at an end.

The Harvest

In the beginning of September the rains have diminished noticeably. A few days of fine weather appear now and then, and further on in October there are only occasional afternoon showers. It is a wonderful time that now sets in for these jungle farmers. The rice is turning yellow on the steep slopes of the swiddens, and completely hides the black logs and stumps which are the remains of the burned forest. The panicles are bent, heavy with the ripe grain. The paths are covered with the olive-green leaves of the peanuts. The cottages are surrounded with an effusion of bright flowers, and on the roofs of the watch houses we see red pepper in Chinese red, yellow and sharp green colors, and cut tobacco in verdigris green, lying in flat baskets to dry.

The time has come which the Lamet consider the best of all the year. There is plenty of food and the weather is wonderful. The rice is ready to be harvested. But before this can be done, sacrifices must be made to the various spirits that are connected with vegetable growth. Those who

have not previously during the year sacrificed to the ancestor spirits, must now bring forth their bronze drums, if they have any, and beat upon them all the while that the ceremonies are in progress.

Sacrifice is made then to the spirit of the bronze drum by sticking feathers onto it with the blood of a hen and performing *tukti* on the frog ornaments, and saying:

pāk klō lepāg yām ti puug-ē-pō

Spatter blood bronze drum, gong, sound of a couple (of bronze drums).

pēn plē rōi plē

May there be (many) pieces, hundred pieces.

The Lamet say that when the ancestor spirits hear the beautiful sound of the bronze drums, they are enticed to the watch houses. However, as long as the harvest continues, no sacrifice can be made to these spirits. This must wait until the harvest is over, and a suitable occasion is arranged at home in the village. If a man has no bronze drums, he cannot call up the ancestor spirits. It is only the rich men who can do this at harvest time.

Tapia, one of the more prominent men in Mokala Panghay, had not made any sacrifice to his ancestor spirits, and therefore he had to hang both his bronze drums in his watch house. He had been in good health all the previous year, so it had not been necessary either for him to slaughter a buffalo in honor of his ancestors. But just about the time when the harvest was ready he became ill, and as soon as the harvest was taken in and stored in the barns, and the last agricultural ceremony was over, he began arranging a feast for his ancestors in order to improve his health. Unfortunately I was unable to attend this.

Most of the ceremonies that take place during the harvest have the object of scaring away the dangerous spirits, so that they cannot injure or place obstacles in the way of the soul of rice. At the same time, an effort is made to gather together as much of this soul of rice as possible, by first leading it to the watch houses and later on to the barns.

The Soul of Rice

Rice possesses *klpu* just as a human being does, and the soul of rice is called *klpu gō*. *klpu* in the stalks of the rice cannot be increased, but on the other hand, rice souls from other parts can be enticed, which is inferred in the various prayers. The soul of rice is the growing power

of the rice, and if the soul of rice escapes, i.e., leaves the rice, the Lamet believe that the supply of rice in the barns will soon be exhausted and famine will follow. Now the soul of rice is evidently a very ethereal thing which can easily vanish into other parts. Therefore it must be led and enticed on to the right path, and when it once is got hold of it must be fastened with stones, exactly as the soul of a human being is fastened to the grave, and the village spirit to the village square.

Strangely enough, no other plant has *klpu*, and it is reserved only for human beings and rice. We can question what this is due to, and I made an effort to delve into this problem in a special article.¹⁾ The conception of the soul of rice is in existence as well among many other rice cultivating peoples of southern Asia, and this conception together with the ceremonies and magic treatment that are performed for the soul of rice are similar everywhere to the last detail, and peculiarly enough remarkably like the customs that are connected with the conception of corn spirits in Europe. Even here fastening with stones appears, the belief that the corn spirit runs away from the scythe and takes refuge in the "last sheaf." Therefore I consider it possible that when the Lamet once learned the art of cultivating rice, they accepted also the idea of a power of growth in connection with it, in the same way as the instructions for use are learned for a new thing to be put into use. This conception of power of growth has then been adapted to ideas already in existence, and placed in the *klpu* category which they must have had before they began cultivating rice. This hypothesis explains why other cultivated plants have no soul, which possibly is due to the fact that they were already known of before the cultivation of rice was adopted. On the other hand, this explains the great difference in the contents of the conception in the terms which exist among other types of peoples in southeastern Asia. Therefore I consider the conception of power of growth to have been something new, and the conception has then been fitted by all of these peoples into their own categories, and naturally that which was best suited for the introduced idea.

In order to lead the soul of rice along the right way, altars are placed out at the crossroads, for persuading it to take the path leading to the swiddens. These altars are also intended for scaring away evil spirits, which linger at crossroads, and possible might prevent the soul of rice from going farther. Small wooden sticks are also set out here and there along

¹⁾ K. G. Izikowitz: Fastening the soul. Some religious traits among the Lamet (French Indochina). Göteborgs Högskolas Årsskrift XLVII, Göteborg, 1941.

the paths. These are hooked at the top, and it is their purpose to show the soul of rice that it is on the right path.

When the harvest takes place, the soul of rice moves away, and when one section is clear the soul of rice must therefore be led over to the next one. These sections are marked off by small paths on the swidden. The soul of rice, like a number of other spirits (the spirit of death, for example), cannot make its way over open spaces, and must be enticed over a path to another section. It is done by taking a charred branch of a tree, or a log, and laying this across the path with a bunch of flowers tied to it. This bouquet is called *ntri*, and the flowers used are those that have been raised on the swidden. When the soul of rice sees these flowers, it is enticed to follow along the branch or log into the next section. When this has been done, the first section can be harvested completely.

The Lamet say, *klpā gō roh ti puynōg*, which means that the soul of rice is led along the log. They also say, *klpā gō tréag*, which means: the soul of rice goes over (the path). *éag* means to cross a path. *tr-* is a prefix, which means to do something in any way whatever, in an irregular way. That is to say that this prefix suggests that the soul of rice does not go like a person or an animal, but glides, rather, in some unknown way.

The section that is harvested last of all is the *yah*, and when the soul of rice has been shifted bit by bit during the process of harvesting from one section to the next, it lands finally in the *yah*, the holy region that was sown first. However, it is only a part of the soul of rice that is referred to here.

When the women carry the rice to the watch house, they are required to first pass *kən-éag*, a kind of gate through which that part of the soul of rice that remains in the rice can pass. On the other hand, this gate does not allow dangerous spirits to enter. These are swept away by the long streamers hanging from the roof of the gate (fig. 109). The rice is then laid out on the platform



Fig. 108. The entrance to the watch house. The gate is the *kən-éag*.

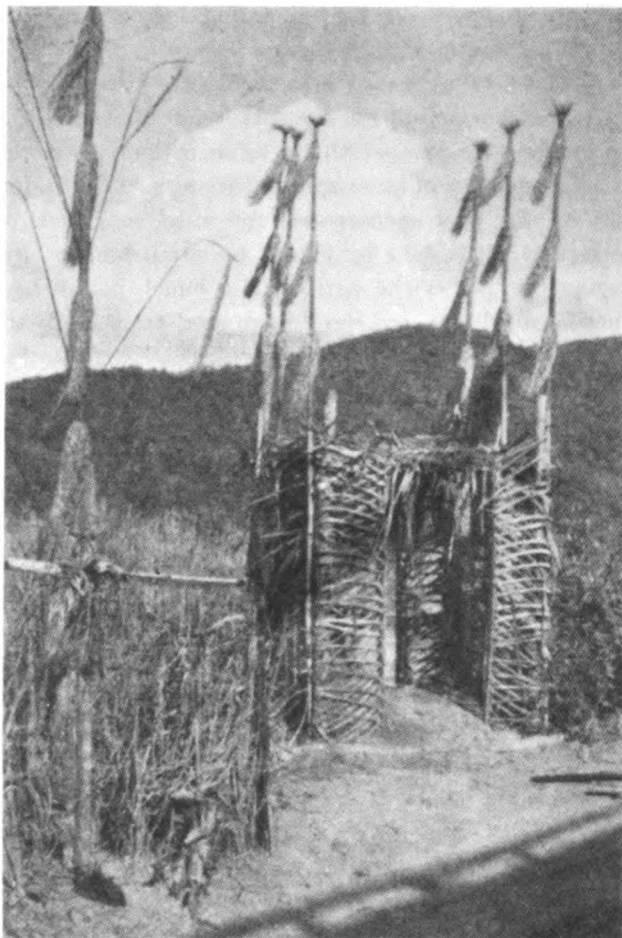


Fig. 109. The *kən-čay* seen from the watch house. To the left the sacrifice pole to the village spirit.

for threshing. The straw that remains also contains the soul of rice, and is therefore placed under a special altar called *krugtan*, and a stone is placed on the straw in order to fasten the soul of rice and prevent it from escaping. Later, when the rice that is needed for eating while the watch houses are in use is husked, the coarser husks are laid in the gateway *kən-čay*, and a stone is laid on top of them also. The threshed rice is then laid inside the watch house. Bouquets of flowers (*ntri*) are tied to the rafters that happen to be above the threshed rice, in order to entice the soul of rice.

Long bamboo rods with tassels are fastened to the corner of a gable at the ridge of the roof. These are called *krug-ntag* = watch house horns. The Lamet say that when the soul of rice sees them it enters the *ntag* (watch house).

The Lamet are very much worried that the soul of rice will escape. If a boar should enter the swidden, it is driven away with lances and shrieking. Once when this happened, I offered to shoot the boar but my suggestion met with definite disapproval. The Lamet as a matter of fact believe that all spirits are particularly afraid of shooting, and of course this includes the soul of rice. If I began to shoot, this soul would immediately depart.

When the last section *yah* is harvested, the rice is not gathered, but instead it is broken off and placed together in a sheaf. Thus in this sheaf is to be found the concentration of the whole soul of rice. When all of the rice is finally borne into the barns, a ceremony is performed for *klpu gɔ̌*. The last and only sheaf is then laid on top of a heap, or perhaps somewhere else in the barn, and a stone is placed upon it, usually a grindstone. A stone is also placed under the barn, so that the soul of rice cannot escape.

Ceremonies at the Beginning of the Harvest

There are a number of shrines to be seen around the watch house (see fig. 110). One is intended for *čim mār*, the spirit of the swidden. This consists of a long bamboo rod with tassels and a *talē*. *čim mār* is invited to come and eat here, but must then depart. The sacrifice pole stands north of the watch house just on the boundary between *yah* and the rest of the swidden.

In the *yah* itself there is a little shrine for the soul of rice, or the spirit of rice, which is also called forth. This shrine is built like a little house, about one meter long and half a meter wide. It is called *ntag mbrōg gɔ̌* = the rice spirit's watch house. There is a little platform of bamboo under its roof, and here models or symbols of a bronze drum, a gong and a rice basket filled with earth and wooden coins are placed. The earth in the basket is symbolic for its being filled to overflowing with rice.

On each side of the watch house, that is, east and west of it, there are two poles with tassels (*runśum*). These are intended for the village spirit, and are called *mbrōg yig šaksūn*. These bamboo rods are also provided with *talē* and a wooden sword.

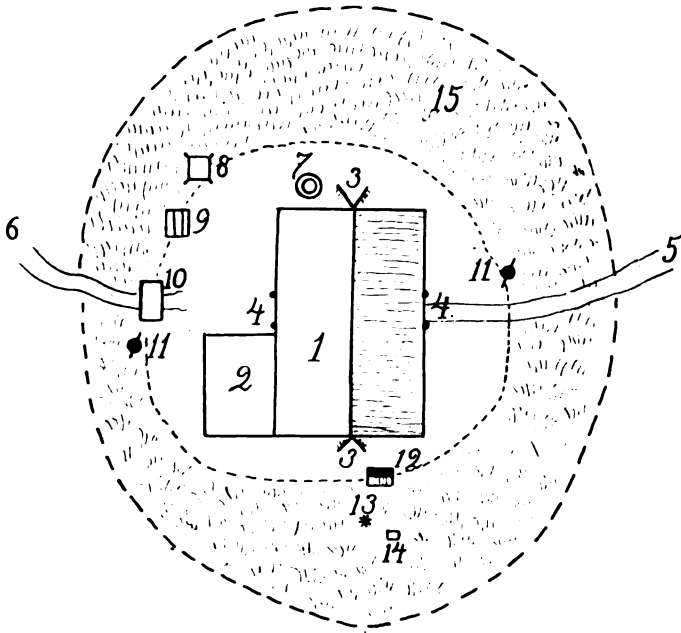


Fig. 110. Watch house with shrines and *yah*. Lower Lamet. 1 = watch house, 2 = threshing floor, 3 = house horns on the gables, 4 = entrances, 5 = path from the village, 6 = path to the swidden, 7 = rice mortar, 8 = *krugtan*, 9 = drying rack for red pepper, 10 = *kən-čag* (gate), 11 = sacrifice poles to the village spirit, 12 = *ntag klpū gō*, 13 = *talā*, 14 = sacrifice pole to *mbrōg čōm*, 15 = *yah*.

Where the path from the land leads to the open space around the watch house, the gateway *kən-čag* stands, as was described in the foregoing. It is very low, and one must bow down in order to pass it. Just south of this gate there is a drying rack, where red pepper is dried. And a couple of meters farther on stands *krugtan* (fig. 112).

This shrine consists of four bamboo rods which stand in a square, and a platform of bamboo is fastened to these somewhat more than a me-



Fig. 111. The shrine for the soul of rice.

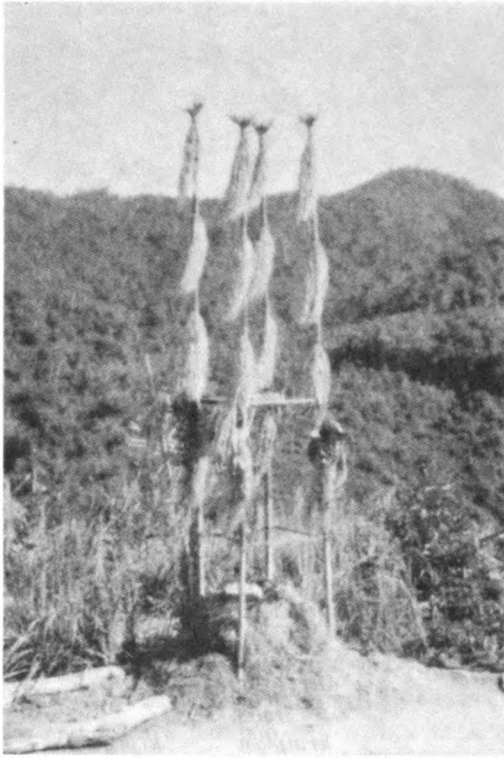


Fig. 112. *kruktan*, the shrine for the four nature spirits. On the platform rice and rice wine are sacrificed. Below, rice chaffs on the top of which is a stone to fasten the soul of rice.

ter above the ground. A *talā* is fastened to it facing south, and the upper part of the bamboo rods is slit up into tassels. This shrine is intended for four different nature spirits: *phi mōit*, the spirit of the mountains, *phi sénog*, the spirit of the horizon, *prierr ōm*, the spirit of streams or rivers, and *prierr tā*, the spirit of the valleys. The word *kruug* really means horn and crotch. In many parts of Further India forked twigs or Y-formed poles are set up as a sign that a buffalo has been sacrificed. I have not seen any such among the Lamet, but I have often asked about them. They told me that the Khmu use these at graves. It is possible that this shrine has formerly had a horn-like or Y-formed ornament of this kind.

When the harvest is about to begin, sacrifice must be made at some of these altars. At *kruktan* a hen is sacrificed to the four nature spirits, and the following is repeated:

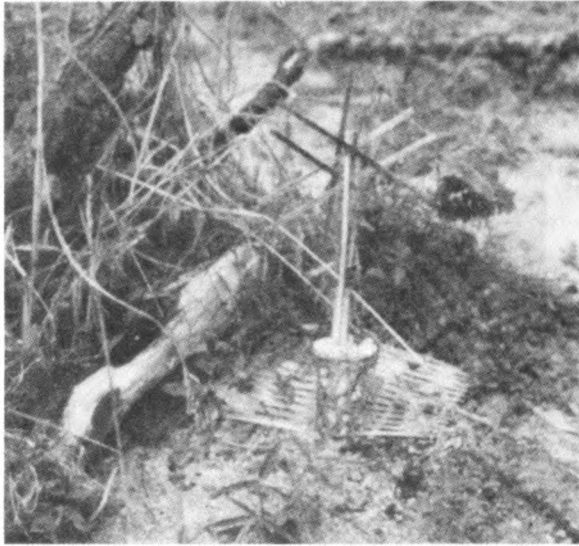


Fig. 113. Sacrifice on the swidden. A model of a rice basket filled with rice symbolizing great plenty of rice. In this a stick with a *tal̥*. On the sacrifice tray of plaited bamboo, sacrificial gifts.

pāk *krugtān* *krugt̥səŋ* *vaʔ ə* *khat*
 — Smear sacrifice-blood *krugtān*, sacrifice bowl, don't block,
vaʔ ə khūn mbrōŋ g̊ mbrōŋ ʔp kah n̄k *kah*
 don't prevent spirit paddy,⁽¹⁾ spirit rice. Give full (rice baskets), give
lōn ntag ntr̄ pēn t̥k
 overflowing watch house bouquet.⁽²⁾ May there be (many) "baskets," ⁽³⁾
r̄i t̥k r̄əŋsā r̄əŋsom
 hundred baskets, protect us.⁽⁴⁾

(1) They don't want the nature spirits to hinder the soul of rice.

(2) The bouquet (*ntr̄*) symbolises the soul of rice.

(3) *t̥k* means to pour, to spill from a basket full of rice. The quantity of the rice is calculated from the number of "pourings" from a full rice basket (*cōn*). It is hard to find a word for this, but the French *versée* describes it pretty well.

- (4) The Lamet could not explain the last two words. They declared that they had heard them in Laotic prayers, where the phrase *hak som, hak sa* is used. My Laotic secretary told me that this phrase was included in ancient Thai spells, and that *hak som* really means to love and admire. According to him, this phrase should mean to help and protect. It was a common thing for spells in Laotic and Yuan to finish with these words.

Free translation:

"I smear sacrifice blood on *krugtan*, (on a sacrifice bowl of a forked twig). Don't block, don't prevent the paddy spirit, the rice spirit. Give us full baskets, flowing baskets. Rice soul (bouquet) in the watch house, let there be many baskets, a hundred baskets, and protect us."

While the harvest is in process, small sacrifices must continually be made at *krugtan*, especially at festival time. Tapia once invited me to drink wine in his watch house, and when he took up the wine jug he did not dare to place it directly on the floor of the watch house, but placed a little bouquet under the jug. This was intended for the soul of rice, otherwise one might not get enough rice to brew more wine. Evidently he did this in order to reinforce the rice soul that was in the wine jug, for perhaps the wine could lose its strength. Just as we began to drink, Tapia jumped up and filled a bamboo cup with a little of the wine, took a little rice ball, and ran up to *krugtan* and placed these things on its place of sacrifice. Then he mumbled a spell which he later explained to me should always be done before partaking of food or wine.

It was as follows:

éau pɔŋ éau luŋ tɔŋ som mpə̌t ntōl va'ə ti-éai
 Lord Pong, Lord Lung, drink, eat wine fermented. Don't destroy
mai éā hoŋ mpə̌t
 trees wine.

kah n'ēm pri n'ēm éæŋ
 Give tasty red pepper, tasty

éau nai tūh tɔŋ mpə̌t ti ntay ti ntī
 Lord Nai come, drink wine in the watch house, in the bouquet,
va'ə mai éā
 don't

This incantation is strongly mixed with Yuan, and none of the Lamet could translate it completely. My secretary declared that the first phrase (in Yuan) *tiao Pong, tiao Lung* means "lord over this district." It is a formula used by the Lao when they fish *pha-bək*, a big fish about three meters long, which is to be found in the Mekong, and the fishing of which is bound up with a number of rites. The words are taken from *peng* = district, and *lung* = region. The other words which were untranslatable, seem also to have been taken from incantations learned from Yuan.

At this time a hen is also sacrificed at *ntag mbrōg yō*.

The following is chanted:

mbrōg yō mbrōg ap tūh lei' ti ntag kah
 — Spirit paddy, spirit rice, come, enter the watch house, give
nūk kah lōn pēn tōk
 filled (rice baskets), give overflowing. Let there be (many) pourings,
rōi tōk tūn kətah yūg kətah
 hundred pourings heaped, bottom of the grain pile, bottom of the
pōk pēn līm⁽¹⁾ ntrug ntrau pēn
 rice basket, may there be copper coins from Nam Tha, may there be
lau⁽¹⁾ ntrug krōg pēn klō prgi
 coins from Mekong, may there be bronze drums pleasant sounding.
pēn nē lək pēn kmul⁽²⁾ ləg kōmpāk pēn trāk ləg kruug
 Get wife good, get money big wide, get buffalo (with) long horns.

(1) *līm* and *lau* are old coins in the shape of billets.

(2) *kmul* = ancient silver coin in the shape of billets or canoes.

Free translation:

"Paddy spirit, rice spirit, please enter the watch house. Give us filled baskets, give us flowing baskets, may there be many pourings, a hundred heaped pourings from the bottom up to the edge of the grain bins, of the rice baskets. Let us have copper billets from Nam Tha, let us have coins from Mekong, have pleasant sounding bronze drums, have good wives, have big, wide silver ornaments, and buffalo with long horns."

The Lamet explained this formula as meaning that they wanted enough rice and money to enable them to buy wares from the merchants that come up the Nam Tha and Mekong Rivers. In older times silver and copper coins in the shape of billets, or miniature canoes were used. They were

often stamped by the authorities in the local Thai states. In some tribes the bride price is still paid in this kind of coin. Their wishing for buffaloes with long horns comes from the fact that these are particularly suitable as sacrifices for ancestors, and they are decidedly more valuable than other kinds from a standpoint of money.

In the *kən-čag* rice is sacrificed, and blood of a hen is smeared, and the following is repeated:

ū pāk kən-čag prierr vaʼə kām kən-čag mbrōg ɣ̌

Oh! smear blood *kən-čag*, death spirit don't pass *kən-čag*. Spirit paddy,

mbrōg up tūh leiʼ ti ntag ti ntri kah
spirit rice come, enter the watch house into the bouquet. Give

nūk kah lōn pēn t̃k rōi
filled (rice baskets), give overflowing, (let there) be pourings, hundred

t̃k ɣ̌ muɣ phā ɣ̌ rnā luh nātɔŋ⁽¹⁾
pourings. Rice from rice from plains.

- (1) These words are surely names of places. Similar names appear in other formulas. Evidently they want the rice souls from these regions to come to the swidden.

Free translation:

"Oh! I smear blood on *kən-čag*. Don't let the death spirit pass *kən-čag*. Paddy spirit, rice spirit, please enter the watch house and go into the bouquet. Give us filled rice baskets, overflowing baskets. May there be many pourings of the rice baskets, a hundred pourings. Rice (souls) from *muɣ phā*, rice (souls) from *rnā luh* plains."

As already pointed out, the technique itself that is used in harvesting is exceedingly simple. The rice is simply gathered with the hands, and it is laid in sowing-baskets which are borne at the waist. As soon as a basket is full, it is emptied into a large woman's basket intended for carrying rice (*cōn*). When these larger baskets are filled, the woman bear the rice to the watch houses. There it is threshed by boys on the threshing veranda or inside the watch houses. This is done by the boys "dancing" on the grain, and separating the rice from what is left of the straw. Later it is winnowed by the women in order to be cleaner. The rice is laid in a flat plaited tray and thrown up into the air so that stray parts of the plant can fall away while the grains remain in the winnows. After



Fig. 114. The rice is gathered with the hands.

this the rice is placed on mats and dried in the sun. When the harvest is done, the rice is borne into the barns.

The Upper Lamet bear a little at a time during the harvest season, since the barns lie in the neighborhood of the village, far away from the swiddens, and since besides, these people prefer to return to their villages. The Lower Lamet bear in the harvest at one time, since their barns lie on the contrary near to the swiddens, that is, far from the vil-

lage. Here they often move their barns also, so that they are not too far from the swiddens.

The barns (figs. 6, 7, 103, 115 and 124) are built on piles about one and a half meter above the ground, and they are about three meters square. Under the floor of the barn, on the upper part of the poles, there is a wooden piece about half a meter in diameter. This is intended for preventing rats from getting into the barn. There are two compartments inside of the barn, a lower, where the grain is stored, and an upper "attic" beneath the roof, where articles of value are kept, such as those used at feasts for the ancestor spirits. The rice is stored partly in grain bins, which are a kind of large cylindrical baskets. Each different variety of rice is placed in one of these. A great quantity of rice lies in a pile right on the floor near the wall opposite to the entrance. This rice is used mainly for consumption and for sale, and all kinds of rice are mixed here. Not until this is consumed do the Lamet take that stored in the bins. The latter, however, is really intended for the next sowing.

Among the Lower Lamet the transportation of rice to the barns cannot begin until the *yah* is harvested, and the last sheaf borne into the watch house. When this is done, a cock and an egg are sacrificed, and blood is spattered on the last sheaf. The following is chanted:

<i>pāk</i>	<i>gō</i>	<i>pāk</i>	<i>ap</i>	<i>ā</i>	<i>mbrōg</i>	<i>gō</i>	<i>mbrōg</i>
Spatter blood paddy, spatter blood rice. Aah spirit paddy, spirit							
<i>ap</i>	<i>lei' ti</i>	<i>ntag</i>	<i>lei' ti</i>	<i>ntri</i>	<i>pēn</i>	<i>tōk</i>	<i>rōi</i>
rice, enter the barn, enter the bouquet. Give pourings, hundred							



Fig. 115. A barn just after the last ceremony for the soul of rice is made. At the base of the rear left pole the stone for the soul of rice is seen. The stone is put in a small basket filled with earth. Two *talæ* at each side of the barn and a string round the poles to prevent evil spirits from entering the barn.

t5k kah n5k kah l5n muq l5u muq
 pourings, give filled, give overflowing (baskets). Region Lu people, region
lau muq phā nā-lūih t5h leit'
 Lao, region Soul of rice in watered rice field, please enter,
t5h k5t k5k ēr k5k šim, n5am
 please come in. Eat the hen, eat the bird, (eat) the egg.

This prayer is about the same as the formula for *kən-čag*. Here it appears a little more definitely that it is meant that the souls of rice from different regions, like the watered rice fields of Lu and Lao, as well as the Pha district, should enter the watch house.

The bearing in of the harvest can then begin, and when it is done and the last sheaf has been taken into the barn, one says:

prlōi trōl mbrōg gō mbrōg ap kæk ēr
Sacrifice(?) barn, spirit paddy, spirit rice, eat (i. e. bite) the cock.

nūk gō nūk ap lōn pēn
(Give us) plenty of paddy, plenty of rice, overflowing. Let there be (many)
tōk rōi tōk kah šæn kah kuŋ
pourings, hundred pourings. Give enough, give to stay.

Free translation:

"I sacrifice to the soul of rice in the barn. Paddy spirit, rice spirit, eat the cock. Give us plenty of paddy, plenty of rice to overflowing. Let there be many, a hundred pourings. Let the rice suffice. Let the soul of rice remain in the barn."

In conclusion, I can cite, as an example of the Lamet's attitude towards rice, a few remarks made to me by one of my informants among the Upper Lamet. It is written down in his dialect:

vək xāu gō xāu gō nūk tōl xāu ēr tōm mo
Go sacrifice paddy, sacrifice paddy filled barn. Sacrifice cock cooked one
tō kah ō pēn pū gō nūk tōl plō klpā
piece, give me possibility eat paddy (food). Fill the barn, make the soul
gō kah lək kah klpā gō pēn khōi vāi pēn
paddy give well. Let the soul of rice be able servant to buy, be able
ē-pai pəh khe ləkun hkiāk kah šak ap
your slave to pay debts, become rich, courageous, get satisfied rice.
pēn gō kah ō ləkun
Be able rice to give me money.

Free translation:

"When the barn is full I go and sacrifice to the soul of rice. When I sacrifice a cooked chicken, it gives me the possibility of getting food. I sacrifice then to the soul of rice so that it will give me a good exchange. Let the soul of rice make it possible for (me humble servant), to buy, and even for (me) your slave, to pay my debts, so I can become rich and courageous, and have lots of food. When I own rice it will be possible for me to get money."

Gardens

Besides the swiddens, the Lamet have permanent places for cultivation, partly those that surround the village territory, and partly tea plots out in the woods.

These tea plantings lie spread out here and there down on the slopes, and preferably near a stream. Every such garden belongs to one house group. They can hardly be more than 50–200 sq. m. in size. The variety of tea that is cultivated is generally wild tea, and since the plants are not trimmed, they do not become bushes, but rather trees about 2–3 meters high. The Lamet do not know the art of cooking tea. They chew fermented tea leaves instead. The tea leaves are picked, dampened,

and packed tightly in coarse bamboo tubes. These are then buried in the earth, where they lie and ferment for a while. Little piles of earth are usually seen just outside the villages, and it is under them that the tea is buried for fermentation. When it has fermented sufficiently, it smells something like saurkraut. The Lamet take a pinch of fermented tea leaves, sprinkle a little salt on it, and then chew this quid. The saliva becomes dark brown, and the tea really tastes excellent and has a beneficial, stimulating, effect. The Lamet say that if one is not used to chewing this fermented tea, which is called *mez*, and takes it late in the evening, it will keep one awake. Meng is a highly prized stimulant, and is used almost as much as betel. I cannot state with certainty, if it is a habit handed down from former days, but I know that this chewing of fermented tea leaves is also practiced among the Yuan in northern Siam. It would be interesting to find out if this use of tea leaves preceded the art of using the leaves for cooking. Fermentation is of course an exceedingly common process of conservation in a great many parts of the world; the Eskimos, for example, use rotten meat for chewing. On the whole, fermentation plays an important part among many peoples. In Further India fish is fermented on a large scale, and the brine is used as



Fig. 116. The second-rank wife of the village chief husking rice at the swidden house. In front of the mortar a rice basket.

a sort of seasoning which seems to have been the precedent for soya sauce, which is also produced by fermentation. The Lao ferment pork and caviar, and the Yuan eat fermented garlic as a kind of delicacy.

The chewing of different kinds of leaves and other parts of plants also occurs widely. Thus they chewed opium in India before they discovered the art of smoking it. This discovery seems to have been made rather recently, coming to China for the first time during the 18th century, where it later developed into a whole ceremony. We can well wonder how all these stimulants originated, and I noticed that the Lamet were aware of the taste of a great many leaves and other parts of plants. They have evidently chewed and tried out all of them. By way of example, in the village Sathoun they used the stems of a species of *Sorghum* as "licksticks." These were very sweet and resembled sugar cane. This curiosity about everything that the world of vegetation has to offer, combined with the knowledge of the processes of fermentation, has surely contributed to the creating of many stimulants as well as drugs. Rice wine, as a matter of fact, is the product of such fermentation, and it is quite natural to experiment with the results of fermented things. In fact, everything in these warm regions ferments and rots without their being intended to. Strangely enough, I did not come across any real medicine among the Lamet, excepting of course the fact that they knew that certain fruits, like unripe tamarinds, had a laxative effect, and that rice water had the opposite effect. The medicine men do not bother about things like this.

The gardens in and around the villages consist partly of small fenced-in garden plots, where a few vegetables are raised, and partly of enclosures for fruit trees, as well as trees which stand alone.

The fruit trees include mango, tamarind, citrus varieties such as lemons, oranges, tangerines and pomelos. A difference in citrus varieties is quite marked. In some villages, for example, there are excellent tangerines, while they are quite poor in others, and the case is the same with pomelos. In Mokala Panghay there were at least two different kinds of pomelo, one with light yellow meat, another larger kind with light red meat and somewhat sweeter. Among other peoples as well in the province of Haut-Mékong the same wealth of varieties is to be found, and it would be worth while for those interested in the raising of citrus fruits to become acquainted with these various sorts. Besides these, guava and other tropical fruits are raised. In Mokala Panghay there were no guava, so they fetched them in Ban Hang, that is, the village that had

preceded Mokala Panghay and was now deserted. The various families still owned fruit trees there, where they came now and again to gather the fruit. Each fruit tree is private property, owned by the one who planted it.

The Lamet require a large supply of betel nuts for chewing. Besides tobacco and meng, betel is one of the most treasured objects. Moreover, betel plays an important part in sacrifices to the various spirits. In spite of all this, the raising of betel palms is not common among the Lamet. I do not know what the cause of this is. It is possible that there is some difficulty in getting these palms to grow, high up in the mountains. For this reason, however, the Lamet are obliged to import large quantities of dried betel nuts. They are cut into bits and threaded on straws or strings and dried. They are sold in bunches. Betel leaves are obtained from their own plants. On the other hand, the quicklime needed for this chewing must be bought.

In the village of Mokala Panghay I came across an exception, however, for the *xamiā* there owned a little plantation of areca palms. According to what he himself told me, he had learned how to raise them from the Yuan and Lao down along the Mekong. In his younger days he had travelled quite a bit, and it was the time that preceded the coming of the French, when the Lamet were forced to pay taxes in the form of beeswax to the Prince of Muong Nan. The *xamiā* told me that the trick in getting the areca palms to bear fruit was really quite simple. All that was necessary was to blow an egg out of its shell and thread the shell on a string which should be bound about the stems of the palms, and this would result in the trees' bearing fruit. He had seen the Lao do this. Besides this plantation, there were tea bushes also to be seen in that village.

The banana is an important plant for the Lamet, and it is planted in these enclosed gardens around the villages. Every family has a banana grove. They are inclosed because they must be protected from the pigs of the village, who are very fond of the stems, and like to tear down the plants and even pull them up by the roots. The bananas raised by the Lamet do not taste particularly nice. They resemble rather the wild banana in type. It is mostly children who eat the fruit, and the Lamet told me that it is not wise to eat too many, because they are likely to cause stomach ache.

What one sees most of in these enclosed gardens, are tobacco and various kinds of red pepper. Once in a while there are beans.

The Lamet are very much interested in new kinds of plants, and they often begged me to get cabbage seeds for them, for they took a liking to



Fig. 117. Old woman spreading out new cut tobacco for drying.

this vegetable. I myself had laid out a garden outside the village, where I raised a number of European vegetables. Celery and tomatoes did not take their fancy, however, but radishes were appreciated.

The gardens within the village are looked after mostly by old men who have not the strength to go out on the swiddens. They poke in the earth continually and plant new things, whenever they are not occupied with the making of implements. They often have the help of children who are not yet old enough for work on the swiddens. Here the children learn the first steps in the art of cultivation.

These gardens have to some extent the function of serving as "fields of experimentation." One old man in my village was extremely interested in new plants. He had obtained a number from Lamet boys who had been away in other parts, and when I came to Mokala Panghay and laid out a garden, he showed a decided interest and begged seeds and plants of me which he immediately set in his own garden. There he had a number of experimental plants, and if these were successful he intended to plant them on a larger scale out on his swidden.

CHAPTER 12.

Organization of Work

In different parts of the foregoing, I described a number of procedures for work and how they are organized. In this chapter therefore, I intend to give only a general survey of the division of work among the Lamet.

As in all societies, there is to be found among the Lamet a certain division of work between the sexes. In many cases the work is common to both parts, but there are also times when only one of them can carry out the work to be done. In analysing the division of work between the sexes, tables are often made up describing the work carried out by each of them, the work performed mutually, or if there should be no definite distribution of work to either one. However, this can often result in a picture which is misleading. The thing to do is rather to begin with the various activities, and see how the division of work takes place in connection with them.

A certain difference in work for men and work for women arises when length of time and periods of time are concerned. The work of the men can be characterized to some extent as work of the season, and that of the women as daily routine, which except for a few variations is about the same all year round. This is because the work of the men is based to a greater degree on production, while that of the women is only partially based on this, i. e., the production of raw materials. The main work for the women is the home and the children. Thus the work of the men is decidedly more varied, and bound up with the periods named previously in chapter 8.

On entering a Lamet village, one always sees women at work. On the other hand, the men are often seen sitting around the fires in the community house, chatting, and a chance traveller would most certainly get the impression that the women are those who do the work, while the men have nothing special on hand. Now the work of men is carried on mostly outside the village, and it is only there that they can be seen fully employed. Another thing that is soon drawn to one's attention is that the women seem to have practically no spare time. They seem to be occupied

from sunrise until night. Spare time as a problem is a matter of much discussion in our modern communities. A problem of this kind can hardly be said to exist in primitive societies. As a rule the workdays are made the most of, and then there can follow days when people do not work any more than they are obliged to. As was mentioned previously, there are certain holidays when work in the woods and the husking of rice is forbidden. But this does not result in their becoming idle and doing nothing. They find something else to do instead.

On free days both men and women sit with some light occupation. The women make net bags, perhaps, and the men make implements. On these occasions they often sit together in groups and talk, and in this way work and pleasure are combined. In one village the young people, and older women as well, gathered round the open fires in the middle of the village square every evening to dry banana leaves. These are used for rolling cigarettes in the same way that cigarette paper is used. It is done by rolling a banana leaf about a thick bamboo tube and holding it near the fire until it is dry. By stretching it round the bamboo tube the leaf becomes smooth and does not burn or scorch so easily since the bamboo tube diverts the heat. This is a typical occupation for spare time, when the village people sit in groups and have something to occupy themselves with, but spend most of their time talking.

Among the Thai peoples evening occupation has developed into a social institution. The women take their spinning wheels and gather at certain platforms in the village. Fires which are built in the middle of these platforms are lit, and the women place themselves about them, with the men in their turn forming an outer circle and playing their clarinets and singing old ballads for the entertainment of the women. As long as no festival is in process, free time is thus filled with some kind of occupation as a rule, and it reminds one to some extent of the churning parties or spinning festivals in rural Sweden of former times. This can also be compared to some extent with the modern sewing circle. In our modern society people work under a certain pressure and for a definite number of hours, and besides, in many cases not for oneself, but for others. It is evident that in such cases free time gets to play an important role. Free time here is then used for meeting friends and acquaintances, or for working for oneself.

Nothing resembling this institution exists among the Lamet where the people live in villages. They meet continually, and the work performed is generally that necessary for oneself or the family. Besides, they seldom

work under pressure. The Lamet take life easily, and work is discontinued now and then with a pause for sitting and chatting or taking a puff at a smoking pipe which is always within reach for both men and women.

Daily life presents but little diversity, as we can see. It is really the holidays with the great feasts that provide the regular intermissions. Perhaps now and again people from other villages can come on a visit, and they are then invited to partake of liquor and wine in the community house. Receptions of this kind can continue all night long, sometimes even for several days and nights, until the liquor comes to an end. Women as well often participate in these feasts. Older women are allowed to come into the community house to drink with the guests, and the younger ones are allowed to remain all night and converse with the guests. It is a custom of theirs that the young women massage the limbs of travellers who have come a long way, and at the same time they sing a song for their welfare "that they may go well in the mountains." Sometimes guests are also received in the private dwellings, but in this case it would concern only relatives or close friends.

The greater number of implements are made by the men. They make crossbows, arrows and other weapons, arrange the details for traps, and plait baskets and mats. They also undertake all kinds of work connected with wood, and this would include practically the whole supply of implements, since nearly everything is made of wood or bamboo. The only implement I have seen the women make is the net bag, and only women use this. As already mentioned in the foregoing, the Lamet cannot manufacture clay vessels, nor can they spin and weave. Bark cloth is made in only one village, and I do not know if it is worked by men or by women. The making of tools is carried on at certain times, especially during the hot season when there is not much else to occupy oneself with. The material for baskets and mats and other kinds of plaited work, which makes up the largest part of the supply of material for tools, is accessible at all times of the year. On the other hand, the softer material needed for net bags, carrying bands and the like, are another matter. This material can be obtained only during the latter part of the rainy period, since they are made of fiber plants which are obtainable only at this time.

It is quite natural that net bags are netted by the women, since the latter are the only ones who use them. They are used in connection with the gathering of bamboo shoots and other wild edible plants, and as I have already described, it is the business of the women to look after this part of household work. Analogous to this is the manufacture of weapons and

hunting implements by the men, since it is the men who do the hunting and slaughtering. Even such a thing as the drying of meat and the preparing of certain dishes as well, is done exclusively by the men. Not until the meat has been dried or buccaneered thoroughly are the women allowed to use it in the preparation of food.

Thus it is obvious that the making of certain implements is connected with the subsequent using of them. If they are to be used by men, then it is the men who make them, and the case is the same in regard to the women.

On the other hand, this is no explanation of the fact that it is exclusively men who do all kinds of plaited work, and such wooden implements as rice mortars, wooden bowls, etc., for a great many of these implements are used in the household by women exclusively.

In the foregoing we have seen how collective work like the building of houses is arranged. It is of course chiefly men who build a house. Women only arrange the covering for the roof. In the example described, we also saw how different groupings according to age went about their work.

Men and women co-operate in agricultural work. Both help with the clearing. However, the men perform the heaviest work and most of it in this case. In the transportation of rice also, both men and women take part, but the greater amount of this work is done by the women. It would never occur to a man to carry one of the large rice baskets. Men always carry things with the help of a fore-and-aft carrying pole, and women with a headband, and since the enormous, heavy rice baskets can only be borne by means of a headband, it remains for the women to manage the greater part of the transportation of rice. Besides, the rice is used in the household, where the women rule.

An interesting division of work between men and women is to be observed in the sowing, where the women place the rice grains in the holes made by the men with their sowing-sticks. In some villages also the women perform the first ceremonial sowing. All this is probably allied to old customs which are perhaps connected with the fact that formerly the women devoted themselves to agriculture to a greater extent than the men.

In regard to the care of domestic animals, buffaloes are looked after by the men exclusively, but pigs and chickens by women mostly. These smaller animals as a matter of fact belong more directly to the household, so to speak, since they are fed on the refuse from rice.

Since the work of the women is more adhering to routine and bound to the home, I shall make an effort to describe the working day of a woman.

We must hold in mind, however, that all women are not bound to the home in the same degree, but that there exists a certain division of work among the women in the same household. If there are several women in one house, a number of them can be entirely free from household work and can share in the agricultural or other work with the men. This refers mainly to capable but childless women, who are thus not occupied with looking after minor children. Women who are too old for working in the forests help only in the household work.

The women rise in the morning before the sun goes up. They are wakened by the village's "alarm clocks," the pigs, who are accustomed to being fed at sunrise, and whose stomachs resemble clockwork that always goes too fast. Long before the sun appears they begin squeaking noisily in their sties. The women then get up and blow alive the embers in the cooking hearth, and fill the clay vessels for the steaming apparatus with water. If there is no husked rice on hand, one of the women of the house must set about doing this. From a number of houses the steady thumping in the rice mortars can then be heard. However, as a rule the rice is husked on the evening before. On rainy days, or holidays, when work on the swiddens and in the forests cannot always be done, the women usually husk rice all day long, so that they have enough for several days to come. Later on, when the rice has been husked and winnowed, it is rinsed and then laid in the cooking-basket for steaming. Vegetables and soup can be prepared on other hearths. It is only rice which must be cooked on the special kitchen hearth. The families that originate from the Khmu have a special partition in the house, where rice is cooked, and where only women are allowed.

While the food is cooking, the men get up. When the rice is ready, the rice water is mixed with a little cold water and mashed husks, and

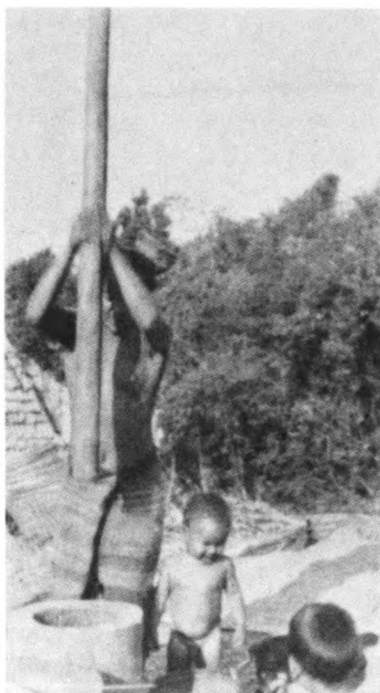


Fig. 118. Husking rice.



Fig. 119. Lamet basketry. From the left are seen a not yet finished rice box, a box for tobacco and fire-making utensils (pyorite and tinder) (height 5 cm.), a rice box (height 9 cm.) and a fish basket (height 21 cm.).

the women fill the various feeding troughs for the pigs with the mixture. When the pigs have eaten, they are let out, and the same is done with the chickens.

When all this has been done, it is time for breakfast. A low table of plaited bamboo is brought forth. Banana leaves are spread out on this, which serve both as plates and tablecloth. The rice is served in rice baskets, one for each member of the household. These are placed on the floor beside the table. Wooden bowls containing soup and other food are placed on the table, and all eat out of these common vessels with their own particular bamboo spoon. They all sit on low stools around the table. Each one takes a fistfull of rice, rolls it into a ball, rubs it on a bit of salt, takes a nip of red pepper and perhaps a bit of meat, and puts it into his mouth. When all have finished eating, the mother divides up what is over among those who are going out to work. She folds bits of meat and other things in banana leaves, and fills the rice boxes, so that all have something with them when they are out on the fields. Then the younger men and women start out for the forests or the swiddens.

During the course of the day the women at home have a great many things to do. If they have small children, these must be seen to, but if there are other important things to undertake, the children are left in the

care of the old men and old women who remain at home all day. After all have eaten, the house must be cleaned. It is swept thoroughly and the sweepings fall down between the cracks in the bamboo floor.

There is quite a bit of work required of the women in order to keep the household in order. First, they must get firewood for cooking and heating. Only the women look after this job. Armed with axes and wood baskets, the latter made of bamboo which is thinly plaited into hexagonal form, they set out for the woods. There they gather dry bamboo, but above all they



Fig. 120. A woman equipped with a firewood basket and an ax.

chop real wood. They usually fell a few trunks just outside of the village, which they allow to lie and become dry. Later they split and chop these into firewood. This is sometimes done out in the woods, and then it is only a matter of carrying home the wood. During the rainy season, when it is rather difficult to get dry wood, they should already have gathered a large enough supply in advance while it was dry. Therefore the women make an effort to work fast and lay in a large supply of wood before it begins to rain seriously. This is stored under the houses, where it can be protected from rain. This concerns especially the Upper Lamet, who remain in the villages during the greater part of the rainy season. There are always large supplies of wood to be seen stored under their houses. Thus the chopping of wood is carried on most intensively during the hottest time of the year in these villages. The Lower Lamet live mostly out on the swiddens during the rainy season, and there they can get plenty of firewood. Everywhere on the swiddens charred logs are to be seen, and these can be used to advantage.

A woman's work of equal importance is the fetching of water. This is also included in the daily routine. Water vessels consist of thick bamboo tubes, which are carried by means of a cord on the forehead. The women are often to be seen going down the mountain slopes to the mountain crevice where the watering place of the village is located. They are provided with long staffs for supporting themselves, for it is often slippery

on these slopes. They fill the water tubes at the well, and then carry them uphill, and I have seen them carry 50 such tubes at a time up the mountains, and it is certain that these containers when full must have a combined weight of about 70-75 kg. However, the women carry this weight without any great difficulty, and one often meets them on the trails carrying great rice baskets of about the same weight.

Further, it is the job of the women to find raw products for food, and these are usually stored in the barns, if it concerns rice or other vegetables, or in the private *cong* if it concerns meat products. Wild plants must of course be fetched directly from the woods. Here then, the real work of transportation consists of carrying the rice from the barns. Among the Upper Lamet there is no difficulty, for the barns lie just outside of the villages. But on the other hand, among the Lower Lamet it is quite a long way to the supplies of grain. For this reason they carry home rather large quantities at a time, in order to avoid going so often. This work is often turned over to the women who go out to work on the swidens or in the woods. When they return to the village they make a detour to the barns.

Then when all the material needed for food has been fetched, it must be prepared. First of all the rice must be husked, which takes up a good deal of their working day. It seems to be one of their most vital occupations. Women are constantly to be seen in the process of husking rice, winnowing it, or mashing the husks and bran for the pigs.

It is also up to the women to see that the food is distributed and that it suffices for all. I shall return to this subject in chap. 14.

The Economic Activities at Different Ages

Heretofore I have accounted for the division of work existing between the different sexes, and now we shall take into consideration the organization of activities among the different ages. As soon as children reach the age when they can run around in the village, they begin to learn a number of occupations. This naturally takes place by means of games. Boys are often seen playing "catch the buffalo." One boy holds a couple of horns made of bamboo or something else, on his forehead, and has a little bell of bamboo fastened round his neck. Another boy runs and tries to catch him and bind him. This game has naturally a certain social meaning. The owning of buffaloes is the highest aim of the Lamet, and children often hear the men speak of their buffaloes. Strangely enough

I never saw Lamet children playing war. When they are older they are allowed to accompany the others to the work in the woods and the fields. Small bags and rice baskets are made for the girls, and they learn to carry these while they are quite young. Gradually they grow into all the work that is performed by a grown-up person.

Boys often sit together with the men in the community house, and there they are taught to help by carrying in firewood and lighting the fires. They also learn how to make traps, and when their arms begin to get a little stronger they are given crossbows which they learn to handle. In certain kinds of work only boys of 10–12 years of age are used. Among these are the threshing of rice, and the fastening of thatching to roofs in the building of houses.

At the age of ten the girls begin to husk rice in the mortars, and one can often see even younger girls playing with toy mortars and husking rice in them. Organized classes of age do not exist among the Lamet, and as I have stated previously, I never came across anything to suggest initiation ceremonies for either boys or girls. As long as the children are very young, they form a group of their own in the village. But when they near the age of ten they begin to follow their parents in their work.

When a boy arrives at the age of 12–13 he is considered to be able to find his own way in the woods, and possibly set simple traps. The Lamet say then that he has become big enough "to know the forest." When he has reached this age he can begin to help with the work in earnest. The same regards the girls. They are then incorporated wholly into the family, and no longer have any time for playing. Instead of spending their time with playmates in the village, they must now help with all the work carried on by the older members of the family. It is natural that they have not the strength to do all kinds of work, but they must occupy themselves with duties that do not strain them too much.

Later on when the boys marry, they are incorporated for a while in the home of the parents-in-law, where they work for a number of years. This is the case for those who are not in a position to pay such a large bride price that they can set up their own household.

As has been stated several times in this book, the old people and those who are disabled in one way or another remain in the villages. They have not the strength to walk the long and troublesome way to the swiddens. However, they are not idle while remaining at home. It is not the case among the Lamet as it is often among European communities, that an old or pensioned person goes quite unoccupied, but they work right up to the

last if they are able to. The old people do not only look after children, but occupy themselves with the making of various implements, prepare the food for the children and themselves, and the old men have their little gardens and plants to take care of. These last are really not absolutely necessary, for the same things are raised on the swiddens, but they believe in having something to do even if they are up in years. Perhaps once or again they make their way to the swiddens in order to visit their relatives, and they do this preferably when the rice is ripe and particularly when the inaugural ceremonies for the harvest take place. This is a time that is enjoyed by all.

From this we gather that the seriousness of life begins rather early for the Lamet youth. As soon as they are capable of doing any work at all, the "children's society" of the village is split up, and they are incorporated into the working units of the house groups. When they are very young they remain in the villages, and after a number of working years as grownups out in the woods and on the swiddens, they are once more confined within the limits of the village when old age has claimed them.

Specialists

Specially trained craftsmen or specialists are unknown among the Lamet. Each and every one can make the same implements as his neighbor. However, in spite of this, there are those who are more skilful than the others, or who occupy themselves with a certain craft to a greater extent than the others, but they cannot be called professionals or specialists for this reason.

One of the older men in Mokala Panghay had specialized in the making of the large rice baskets, which he could do better and more beautifully than all the others. His baskets were known outside of Mokala Panghay, also, and he sold them for 50 cents apiece.

In the preceding chapters I referred to a medicine man, Ai Kam, who had specialized in making traps and setting them in the forest. Since he was too weak for taking part in the heavy work of cultivation, he had begun to specialize in this occupation. He was considered as having an extensive knowledge of the habits of animals, and he was most reliable when it came to setting traps. However, I did not gather from my conversation with him that he had any particular knowledge of magic with which he could lure the animals. The Lamet believe that there are such men with an inner power called *muil*, which they use in persuading plants

to grow better. On the other hand, I never heard them speak of a power of this kind which could be used in connection with wild animals.

There is no smith in the village, but in spite of this fact, some of the men are capable of repairing their implements themselves. However, the men who have learned how to do this have no particular position in the society. None of the Lamet know how to make implements of iron, either.

We can consider the *xamiā* and the medicine men to be specialists of a kind. The former have already been described in the foregoing. The medicine men besides their ordinary trade occupy themselves with looking up lost souls, and those spirits that are the cause of illness. They form no special group and cannot support themselves through their profession, since they are not paid for their work. They have no particular position of power, either. Once when I asked what a medicine man got in return for curing someone, I was laughed at and told that these men are usually the poorest of all. The only compensation that could possibly be considered as such would be the food and drink they get at the séance. However, since the medicine men cannot be considered as professionals within the life of production, I shall not go deeper into their customs in this book.



Fig. 121. A medicine man.

Co-operation

If we should now investigate the extent of production of individuals or a group, we should find that there is very little work carried out by the individual. One example is making of implements, where the same man or woman can gather the raw material needed, and can then perform all the work in its various stages of development. This concerns most of the implements, to be sure. Fishing is a similar case. The men make their own implements, and they usually go out alone on a fishing trip. No help from others is needed in setting out a creel or fishing with a hoop-net. It is another matter when fishing with poison. This

requires the co-operation of a number of persons. Unfortunately I never had the opportunity of observing this method of fishing, so I do not know very much about its organization.

In a treatise on the economic life of the Maori, Firth¹⁾ differentiates between impromptu and permanent working groups. Working groups of the former kind appear surely among most peoples, and not least among the Lamet. A number of women who go out in the woods for gathering wild plants often form a temporary team of this kind. Sometimes it is women from one family or those of kin who keep company, and sometimes it can be a few friends, etc. The husking of rice is considered hard work, and if two women help each other by stamping in one mortar, the work generally goes much faster than if one works alone. It is common that a woman gets help from one in the neighboring house. They do not do the husking at any particular time, and it can happen that two women need to perform this job at just the same time. They agree to get together and help each other.

When it is a question of hunting with the crossbow or of setting traps, a hunter usually goes out alone. However, if he has caught a wild animal in one of his traps, he is in need of help from other men in the village. If the game is a roe, only two men are needed, but if he has succeeded in trapping a wild hog, a bear, or a gaur, a large number of men are required for carrying home this heavy prey. In slaughtering and cutting up the animal also, a number of men are needed as a rule. Some of the fresh meat is prepared at once in the community house, and this is done by the men. This regards also the slaughtering of tame pigs and cattle. This must always take place in the community house or a private *éong*. This kind of work is forbidden in the homes. Besides, the job is a typically masculine one. Here we have an interesting division of masculine and feminine work, carried on, besides, in the special men's or women's localities, and it is probable that this differentiation is due to some extent at least to the fact that the dwellings are a forbidden place for slaughtering, on account of the spirits of the ancestors having a dislike for it. But there is surely a tradition behind all this as well, where the men do the hunting and slaughtering, and look after the cattle, while the women take charge of the vegetable products in the main.

Another work of temporary character carried out by a more or less impromptu group, is the making of the big village drum, described

¹⁾ R. Firth: Primitive economics of the New Zealand Maori. London, 1929, pp. 212 seq.

previously in chapter 7. Here, however, we were able to distinguish a leader in the work, obviously a particularly able man, and a medicine man as well, who could make sacrifice to the spirit of the drum when it was ready, and then the men who helped to stretch the skin on the drum. The drum is considered to be the property of the one who sculptured it, even if a number of men in the village helped to stretch the skin on it. Thus the drum is not the property of the village, but is it used on behalf of the village.

On the whole, my stay among the Lamet was too short to find out the exact part played by kinship in the carrying out of co-operative work. As mentioned previously, I had catalogued the entire population of Mokala Panghay in a card system, just in order to find out how the work was organized in detail, in time units, conditions regarding kinship in the working group, etc. Unfortunately the time chosen for my stay in Mokala Panghay was not suitable for an investigation of this kind, and was technically impossible to carry out.

The most important work of production among the Lamet is connected with agriculture, and here we have a permanent group to deal with, namely the family with all its members. In describing cultivation, I have already pointed out how the distribution of work is organized in cultivating the swiddens. Here the greater part of the family co-operates, and the housefather leads the work. However, the family often joins a swidden group consisting of a number of families, and an exchange of work takes place here by their helping each other by sharing alike. A salary is seldom paid anyone within a swidden group, but on the other hand a man can engage the help of families belonging to other swidden groups, and in such cases the help is usually paid for with rice. In Sithoun the salary for help in chopping the trees of the forest was half a gasoline container of rice, that is, about 9 liters of rice a day. A whole container is paid for help in sowing, and for harvest help a load is paid, that is, about 20 kg rice per person and per day.

When the rice is ready and has been taken into the barns, it is the job of the women to take charge of it in the matter of consumption. If the swidden group and possibly hired help have assisted in the production of the results of agriculture, it is now the business of only the family to do the refining, and here it is only women who do this work. The family also takes all other work for the production of food in hand, since the family is the consuming unit. However, in this matter the division of work between the sexes is not so strictly carried out, that a man is not



Fig. 122. Co-operation in husking.

allowed to do any cooking. In the community house the men are often seen preparing their own food, and they do likewise when out in the woods. However, the main part of the preparation of food rests with the women. Thus we can consider the family as belonging to the permanent working group with a special organization, even if the constituents of the family are changeable.

In the greater communal undertakings the whole village enters into function, for example in building houses. I have already described in chapter 7 how this is organized. Co-operation between villages hardly exists, if one does not classify the clearing of roads under this heading. The paths leading from one village to another are of course important links of communication for the little commerce carried on by the Lamet. Vegetation often appears on these paths during the rainy season to the extent that they are scarcely passable. A team from each village generally sets out on a suitable occasion and clears the road, chopping away the vegetation on the sides as well. This is generally done after the harvest has been taken into the barns, for it is at just this time that commerce is liveliest, and the surplus of rice can be sold, and the products from other parts can be bought. For this reason it is exceptionally important that the traffic routes between villages are usable. The people in Mokala Panghay sold their wares in a Laotic village near the Nam Tha River. The road leading to this village passed by three other villages, and it was kept

in condition by all the villages in common, for they were afraid that if they did not do so, the Laotic business men could not reach them. Each village looked after its own section of the road, i.e., that part that could be considered as lying within the territory of each. The boundaries between these sections of the road were marked with special poles.

Mokala Panghay had cleared its part so that it was quite trafficable in January 1938, but the rest of the way was difficult to pass, since the other villages had not as yet put their sections in order. However, the men in Mokala Panghay had no means of forcing the other villages to repair the rest of the traffic link, and they asked me to help them by sending the people of these villages a typewritten sheet marked with a stamp of some kind, in order to induce them to clear the road. I answered them by reminding them that these people could not read. The men of the village laughed then and said that did not matter, for as soon as they saw the paper with the signature, and found out that it concerned an order from the authorities in regard to clearing the road, they would become so scared that the work would be done immediately. This example shows that there exists indeed a certain measure of co-operation between the villages, but that it is rather voluntary, and that there is no authority in existence that is powerful enough to lead this kind of work. The villages naturally form independent political units.

If one compares the organization of work of the Lamet with that of the Thai peoples, one will discover considerable differences in those cases where the Thai peoples make use of irrigation. The northern Lao, who only make use of swiddens, have an almost similar organization to that of the Lamet, and there exists no co-operation between villages in this case. If instead we take a look at the Black Thai, we find a well developed and organized co-operation between the villages belonging to the same valley or water system. In this case the whole population of the valley has united just because of irrigation into an active unit, and their territorial organization often embraces several such valleys. Among the Lamet no greater territorial units than the village itself have been attained, and even this is in itself a rather loose organization, which can easily be split up, since the village community so seldom makes up an active working group. Its coherence is most likely decided chiefly by the religious functions held by the people in common, as well as a certain need of mutual help, which comes into expression in such activities as house building, hunting, and the like. Among the Thai peoples the villages have evidently been compelled to unite as soon as they began using the system of irrigation.

Survey of the Differentiation of Work

In his analysis of the working conditions on the Trobriand Islands, Malinowski¹⁾ distinguishes between two types of work, which he calls communal and organized work. Firth²⁾ takes up this distinction without using the terms, which he considers unsuitable. Instead, he uses the terminology which is usual in Anglo-Saxon literature on economy: "simple combination of labour," and "complex combination of labour." The first of these two types is characterized by all the workers occupying themselves with the same kind of work. He exemplifies this by describing how they go about drawing a log from the woods. All the workers excepting the leader and those who take care of the rollers under the log do the same kind of work, i. e., they draw the rope. From a practical point of view there is no real differentiation in their functioning.

The other type of work is characterized by a number of persons not performing the same kind of work, but each one contributing with a part of the processes of the work.

Firth remarks that it is very important that a distinction is drawn between these two types, since the organization in each case is radically oblique, and demands different kinds of leadership and rules. These two types are surely to be found among most peoples, and even among the Lamet. Thus agriculture belongs to type 2, and we can place slaughtering, a part of house building, etc. under type 1.

This principle of classification is probably quite right, but certain difficulties arise when it is put into practice. If we take a thing like the Lamet's building of houses, which according to Firth's classification must be included in type 2, it consists of a large number of processes, each of which belong to type 1, for example the bearing of the timber for building from the woods on the part of the men, the working together of the women on thatching, the boys working together in fastening on the "shingles." I should therefore begin with this principle of classification, but combine it then with other peculiarities within the processes of work. In the first place I should include all kinds of work, both individual and communal or co-operative, which is probably a better word. Besides, I should not be content to regard the dragging of a log as a completed work, but as a part of a long process of work, whether the log is to be used in the building of a house, a canoe, or anything else. That is to say, I should look at

¹⁾ B. Malinowski: *Argonauts of the western Pacific*. London, 1922, pp. 159-62.

²⁾ R. Firth: *Primitive economics of the New Zealand Maori*. London, 1929, pp. 220 seq.

the thing as a whole, from the gathering of raw material from nature's supply up to the time that the product is ready for use or for consumption. Besides, this can very well be combined with the division of work between the sexes. By thus regarding the whole process of work as what might be called a combination of functions or activities, we get a larger view over the whole operation, and, as we shall see in the following, we can get at the social categories more in their entirety as active institutions.

We could begin by keeping to the division of work between the sexes and seeing to what degree one kind of work is performed only by either sex or by both. In the first case, I refer to undifferentiated processes of work, in the latter, differentiated.

A typical work for women is the gathering of wild edible plants. For this work the women make their net bags themselves, and moreover, they set out for the woods in unorganized groups. A work that is typical for men is hunting. The men make their own implements, and set out for the woods each for himself, but when they return later on with game, they get help from other men in carrying it and cutting it up. Improving the meat, such as drying it and to some extent roasting it, and the preparation of it for food, is also undertaken by the men. Fishing is of course a masculine work as well, but there is no particular co-operation required in this.

In both of these sections of the life of production, we find a great difference between the work of the men and of the women, and as pointed out a number of times, this work is also assigned to different localities in the villages, since the men are obliged to carry on all masculine work in some sort of *éog*.

In agriculture the work of men and women is differentiated, since both sexes have special roles. In certain cases the women perform one kind of work, such as filling the holes with rice while the men sow, but in most cases both men and women do the same kind of work. However, the men make the implements, while the women chiefly look after the cooking of rice and the preparation of vegetables, and above all the refining of the vegetable products.

As pointed out previously, among the Lamet there is a certain difference in their life in the village during the dry season, and their life on the swiddens during the rainy season. In the first case they carry on work which distinguishes the sexes to a greater degree, and in the latter the sexes work together on a larger scale. The work out on the swiddens is located partly in the watch house, where men and women live together and disregard the rules held in the village. Besides, the agri-

cultural products are stored in special barns located outside the village, and not at all in the dwellings or the private *éog*. Therefore we could ascribe this difference between the undifferentiated and the differentiated processes of work in the life of production to principles of locality. In the one case the life of production proceeds with the village as the central point, in the other case the swidden. But this difference is not accentuated or distinct in any way, although it does appear. Even if the men live in the watch houses for the time being, they carry game back to the village and cut it up there, and all slaughtering of tame animals takes place there as well. Besides, the most important period for gathering wild plants is placed at the beginning of the rainy period, before the Lower Lamet have moved definitely out onto the swidden. As we shall see further on, this difference in the life of production makes its appearance not only in the processes of work, but in other cases as well, such as consumption, property rights, exchange, the grouping of commodities, etc. I shall refer to them in several connections in the following chapters, and in conclusion I shall try to explain what this difference is due to.

So far I have taken into consideration only those processes of work to be found in the life of production itself, or rather, the struggle for food. But similar classifications could also be detected possibly in the processes of work in other branches of community life. Thus the building of a house is differentiated communal work, where men, however, carry out the greater part. They are also owners of the house. The making of implements is also performed mostly by men. But musical instruments, weapons, and several other things are also used by the men. The objects that are used in differentiated work are also made by the men, but in the only case where women perform a completely undifferentiated process of work like gathering, they must make the bags used here themselves. Therefore it is possible that the division of work between the sexes in regard to the making of implements was originally based on the reasoning that the one to use them should make them. However, this is only pure hypothesis which I can in no way prove. It is possible that with comparative study over a limited district, Southeast Asia for example, one could produce still other examples of the differentiation I have described here.

Effectivity of the Organization of Work

The organization of work among the Lamet is certainly not a matter of chance, but has come into being through a number of experiments and trials over a long period of time. Experience in regard to how the things

of nature that are accessible can be made use of, and how the work should be organized, and which rules followed accordingly, has been a heritage from generation to generation. As we have seen in this chapter and in no. 8, organization is adapted to the nature of the work, and to the changes that take place during the year. In this connection one can hardly ask if this organization is really effective. In order to answer such a question, we should first be obliged to investigate working hours, and besides, see to what degree wants are satisfied. I shall go deeper into the latter in chapter 14.

During my stay among the Lamet, I made an attempt to study the hours of working in about the same way as a time expert does in modern industry. For example, I noted the time taken for husking rice, in order to investigate what percent of a woman's working time this took in a normal family (see chap. 13). However, it proved to be difficult to get correct information, since it was practically impossible to follow people in all the phases of their work. Perhaps my inexperience in this type of study contributed to the difficulty also. Therefore I can arrive only at an estimation of these working periods, and since they are so approximate, I do not consider it worth while to present such vague material. The effectivity of labor is not dependent only upon its organization, but upon its technical equipment as well, and it is a combination of both of these factors that must be perceived in relation to the satisfying of needs.

Thus the husking of rice, cooking, and the bearing of water take up a considerable amount of the women's time. But since this work is distributed among various women of the household; and is well organized, much time can be saved. Concerning the processes of the work themselves, it is easy to perceive that as a rule these are so well organized and well managed that they nearly proceed automatically. The factor that wastes time in the production life of the Lamet is to be found not in the organization of work, but in the technical methods used. This is clearly perceived if one compares the Lamet with other tribes in their immediate neighborhood. Among the Yao the women do not need to go down difficult mountain slopes and fetch water, and carry heavy burdens, since the Yao have conduits for water leading right into the kitchen. These people do not live on the very ridges of the mountains like the Lamet, but a bit below. Because of this they are able to dam up water from a rill in a mountain pocket, and by means of coarse bamboo tubes lead it right into their dwellings, for they live at a lower level than the water supply. Naturally this saves a lot of time which can be put to other use. For the Lamet, the

fetching of water takes at least an hour a day for a medium-sized family. Cultivation itself is also extremely time-wasting, since every year a bit of the forest must be chopped down, and this takes at least a couple of months. The harvest also takes up unnecessary time in the fact that the rice is gathered by hand. This generally takes $3\frac{1}{2}$ months. By means of the introduction of new technical methods, the effectivity could be improved to a great extent, and a colonial administrator would have plenty to do right here. However, it is hardly the place of anthropology to make suggestions in regard to the reorganizing of the production life of primitive peoples. Nor would the Lamet understand such a proposition, for they fill their needs quite well with the working methods they already have.

In this chapter we have seen how certain kinds of work are performed by single individuals, and others by co-operative groups. One of these is the house group, which is surely the most important. Here it would be of special interest to find out which type of family is the most effective, or more correctly, how a family should be comprised and how big it should be to become as effective as possible for attaining the goal that the Lamet set for themselves in their production. This is bound up with a number of factors, like capacity for work among the different sexes and ages, and other things. It is impossible just now to attain real clarity in all these factors, and especially their quantitative aspects. However, I shall make an attempt in this direction in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 13.

Economy of one Swidden Group

If one wishes to investigate the economic conditions of Europe, there is no great difficulty in obtaining information on all the different kinds of quantitative material needed. In the so-called civilized countries there are maps on land surveying, indexes on the soil, census reports, and all such material that is needed, and many times statistics that are already complete. There is even so much material on hand, that the European economist often forgets a number of qualitative details that are self-evident in his eyes. He has grown up in the surroundings he is investigating, and finds every category of the community to be more or less "natural." By means of the fact that he seldom obtains a perspective from some community lying outside the European culture, he therefore believes that the "social law" or whatever else it might be called, that is applicable in his community holds good in general. In other words: "He cannot see the forest because of the trees." Not until one begins working with the problem of economic life in non-European communities, is it possible to get a perspective on political economy, and through this perhaps reach new points of view in this science. I cannot say whether this can lead to any economic laws that "hold good in general," for I have not as yet had enough experience in non-European field research.

It is generally very difficult for one studying economy in exotic communities to obtain statistic material, for which reason he must lay most stress on the qualitative instead, as is the case with most of the descriptions made by anthropologists. This is naturally very important, but in order to reach complete understanding it is evident that quantitative material is needed as well. But tremendous difficulties always arise in getting any statistic material, for in most cases official information is entirely lacking. Thus the anthropologist must try to note down schedules of population or similar statistic information as far as he is able to, and then possibly map fields, number domestic animals, try to calculate how much people eat, and consume in other ways, and not least of all try to make studies of hours and work. The

gathering of all such information is usually combined with tremendous difficulties. If a little such information should possibly be obtained, this would illustrate the conditions existing at a certain point of time, and by means of this one cannot determine the changes that might take place unless one has the opportunity of remaining there for a period of years, or possibly of returning after a given time. Besides, the material is often very much limited to one village or the like, and all gathering of statistics among primitive peoples requires a great deal of time.

When I started my investigations among the Lamet, I had determined to obtain some statistic material, but right here I met a typical example of the difficulties referred to. In the first place, it was not easy to arrange my stay in one village for a sufficient length of time. The Lamet were also a totally unknown tribe, and it cost large instruction fees in the form of time, before I got acquainted with the right way of treating this tribe. When I finally got a foothold in the village of Mokala Panghay, it was the time of year when the people had moved out to the swiddens. I made an attempt then to establish quarters out on the swiddens, but this proved to be impossible, for it is taboo for a stranger to live there, since this might injure the growth of the rice. However, if I had been there from the start, it might have been possible for me as hired help to participate in the cultivation of the swidden, and enter a swidden group. But it was impossible to think all this out in advance. My plan was first to make a map of the village and take the census there, and lay this information up on the card system, and then observe their doings day by day, getting all the work of the various individuals registered properly in the same way that Provinse has done with the Siang Dyaks in Central Borneo.¹⁾ This proved impossible to carry out, for I could not make a daily trip to the swiddens which generally lie far from the village. I then made an attempt to map all of the swiddens, but even this encountered difficulties. The Lamet are very suspicious about undertakings of this kind, and as luck would have it, once when I was about to set up a pole on the swidden to use as a measuring point in triangulation, one of the share holders of the swidden began protesting. It happened to be land belonging to the old ex-chief of the village, Tapia, and he became quite troubled over what I was doing, saying that we took the risk that *mbrôp* *ô'm* might come down from the heavens and harm the owners as well as the

¹⁾ John H. Provinse: "Cooperative ricefield cultivation among the Siang Dyaks of Central Borneo." *Am. Anthropol.*, vol. XXXIX, 1937, pp. 77-102.

soul of rice. I had to borrow his lance instead, but only on the condition that I used it with the point turned towards the sky, for the spirits are somewhat afraid of the point of a lance. It is possible that this is why the Lamet use a lance as sowing-stick, for when they sow, the lance points upwards. In any case I had the opportunity of completing my map, and just when it was ready — a couple of days later — Tapia became ill. It was declared that his indisposition was caused by my action, and it was just *mbrög ċm*, the spirit of the swidden, who had brought about his illness. Now, since Tapia was a powerful man in the village and a member of the *lem* class, the news of his illness naturally spread very quickly, resulting in my being forbidden to continue the mapping of the other swiddens.. Thus I had to be contented with the area of one swidden group. Later on, when the harvest was borne into the barns, I had the opportunity of measuring the result of the rice production of this swidden group.

The map is to be seen in fig. 123. It is surveyed by means of a closed polygon and triangulation with the help of a Brunton compass and a tape. The figures from the different points have then been calculated, the distances reduced to the horizontal plane, and a compensation calculation was carried out by means of the least square method. Only straight lines have been drawn between the various points, and not the true contours as is the custom on modern survey maps. The surfaces have then been determined by means of planimeter calculation.

Five families and one single person worked together on this swidden. The last-named was I Vang, an unmarried daughter of Tapia (house no. IV). She had the help of her brother-in-law Ai Som, and her part of the swidden was adjacent to his. The reason for I Vang having land of her own was that she intended to sell the greater part of her harvest of rice, or better, to exchange it for clothes and the like, which she was collecting gradually for her dowry. Ai Nhi was Tapia's brother. I Noi belonged to another family, but was a distant relative of the village chief. The swidden group was represented by three different clans. The area of their territory consisted of 10.5 hektars. In the table below we can see how much land each one had, and how many persons there were in each household, after which I estimated approximately the working power in clearing the forest, and the full working power that can be used in harvesting. In clearing it is obvious that only fullgrown persons can participate, but in harvesting and sowing even children can help. From these figures I can obtain the average which a capable person can clear = 4.570 sq.m., that is to say, hardly half a hektar, that is, somewhat more than one acre. It is hardly necessary to

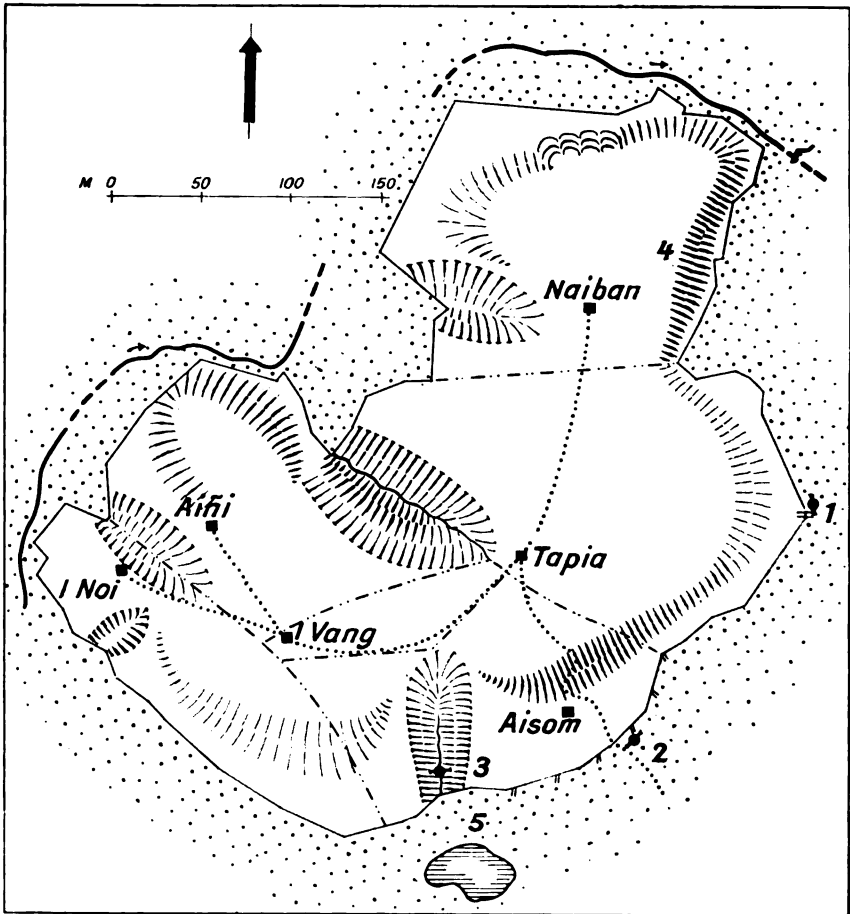


Fig. 123. Map of the swidden. Naiban (Ai Càn, the village chief) = house nr. XV. Tapia = house nr. IV. Aifi (Ai Nhi) = house nr. XIII. I Noi = house nr. XIX. Aisom (Ai Som) = house nr. VIII. I Vang = IV 8. The dotted lines are paths. The lines of short dashes and dots are border lines between the separate swiddens. 1 = sacrifice pole to the village spirit and *phi rəm cām*, a swidden spirit. An entrance to the swidden and a little bridge are situated here. 2 = sacrifice pole to *phi nkah*. 3 = sacrifice pole to *phi òm*, the spirit of the water. In this glen a creek, from which drinking water to the village is fetched. In the vicinity small gardens with vegetables and maniok. 4 = a precipitous slope, sometimes nearly 45°, but cultivated. 5 = pool where the buffaloes of the village gather.

point out that these figures are not generally applicable to swidden-using peoples in Further India, nor to the Lamet nor even to the village of Mokala Panghay. Since I have no other figures, I do not know if they are representative, but they are nevertheless a fixed point. The variation within Mokala Panghay or among the Lamet, all of whom work according to the same principles and with the same implements, cannot be so extremely great. Therefore, the figures arrived at in this map can be used with utter cautiousness as a point of departure.

TABLE 8.

House number	Owner	Consumers	Full working strength	Effective clearing strength	Area in sq. m.	Area per clearing worker
XV	Village chief. . .	14	10	6	25 625	4 270
IV	Tapia.	8	7	6	26 875	4 480
VIII	Ai Som	5	3	3	15 625	5 210
IV 8	I Vang	1	1	1	4 375	4 375
XIII	Ai Nhi	6	5	4	18 750	4 680
XIX	I Noi	3	3	3	13 750	4 580
Total					105 000	

From this table we can get the average area cleared by each person in each family group. In the family of the village chief, each person has cleared the minimum of 4.270 sq.m. The difference between maximum and minimum is 940 sq.m., that is a square the side of which measures about 31 meters. The difference between maximum and average is 630 sq.m. and between average and minimum 370 sq.m. This variation can be explained. The greatest amount of clearing was done in Ai Som's family, which can be considered to be due to the fact that the clearing power consisted of people in their best age. The minimum of the chief's family can be connected with its large number of minor children. A number of other personal qualities also have their influence, naturally, and besides, a great deal can depend on the variation of the quantity of trees on the various pieces of land. Certain trees can be more difficult to chop down than others. However, this is something that I could not determine, since I was not present when the swidden was cleared. Judging by the character of the surrounding forest, however, I got the impression that the species of the supply of trees was more or less uniform, excepting for that on the lowest part of the slopes, where thick-stemmed bamboo grew,



Fig. 124. Barns in Sot Noi.

which is easily cut down. Ai Som's land lay right next to this part, and it is therefore possible that the vegetation on part of his land was of a similar kind, and contributed to his maximum.

Because of reasons mentioned in the foregoing, I could not get any exact information as to the time taken in clearing this swidden. Even if I had been present, this would have been almost impossible to calculate, since the Lamet work rather irregularly. The work begins gradually as early as the last part of December, and sometimes later, and it reaches its climax in the beginning of March. It is the same in regard to the amount of time taken for weeding. In many parts of the land there was quite a bit of rattan palm which shot up from the earth right after the rain made its appearance. The land belonging to the village chief seemed to be particularly troubled with weeds.

The Lamet complain that a foreign weed has crept in. It is an American plant (*Eupatorium odoratum*), and it is seen wherever trees have been chopped down in the forest. This plant gets the upper hand on old swiddens. However, it does not affect a swidden on its first year. Since the Lamet do not use a swidden more than one year, this plant does not cause too much anxiety. It is possible that it delays the regrowth of the swidden's vegetation. Unfortunately I do not know if the Lamet possibly were in the habit of using the same field more than one year

in succession before the spread of this weed. According to Credner it has an extremely destructive influence in Siam.¹⁾

When the rice was borne into the barns I took the opportunity of measuring the amount of production, and this occurred just previously to the performing of the last agricultural ceremony, namely that of transferring the soul of rice into the barns. If I had come after the ceremony had been performed, this measuring would have been impossible for me to undertake. The rice is stored in bins and in rice baskets. This concerns pure varieties, and I saw husked rice there as well as rice ready for use. In every barn there was a heap of mixed rice intended for consumption as far as it could go. The measuring of the rice was done by calculating its capacity in the barns. I then calculated how much had been eaten from the beginning of harvest time to the day that the rice came into the barns. And later on the whole was converted to kilogram weight.²⁾ In order to get the average harvest into kilogram per hektar, I was obliged to first subtract certain sections of land that were used for other cultivated plants, or for paths in the swidden, etc. I estimated this to be approximately 2 % of the area, after a good deal of deliberation. By subtracting the rice that I consider necessary for family consumption and future sowing, I get the surplus which can be used in commerce and the like. Here the amount needed for sowing is calculated to be about 100 grains per sq.m. = 26 kg. per hektar. In order to get an idea of how much the Lamet eat, I took measurements of their food baskets, or rather, the baskets in which cooked rice is kept, and their capacity was then converted into the corresponding figures for uncooked and unhusked rice. According to the measurements I made on the proportion of paddy to unhusked rice, the latter makes up 37 % of the varieties of rice used by the Lamet. The time estimated from the beginning of the harvest to the time of measuring was 3.5 months. From all this we get the figures in table 9 (see next page).

The total harvest of rice consists of 13 736 kg., which means an average harvest per hektar of 1 335 kg. in the whole area, which does not seem to be a low figure as compared with reports from Java, for example.³⁾

¹⁾ W. Credner: Siam, das Land der Tai. Stuttgart, 1935, fig. 17, p. 121.

²⁾ This has taken place in part only approximately acc. to information on the thousand-seed and hektoliter scales which I obtained from the Institute of International Agriculture in Rome.

³⁾ A. Sprecher von Bernegg: Tropische und subtropische Weltwirtschaftspflanzen, p. 52. Stuttgart, 1929. Unfortunately there is very little information on the results of harvests from rice cultivated on swiddens. From Java is reported only 750 kg. per hektar. On irrigated fields a double amount of harvest is calculated.

TABLE 9.

House no.	Sown (kg.)	Measured harvest	Consumption to beg. of harvest	Estim. total harvest	Average harvest per ha.	Consumption during the year	Surplus
XV	65.2	2 263	700	2 900	1 180	2 400	500 kg.
IV	68.5	2 474	410	2 884	1 100	1 400	1 416 "
VIII	51	2 668	230	2 898	1 480	800	2 047 ¹⁾
XIII	48	2 386	350	2 736	1 490	1 200	1 588 "
XIX	35	2 080	175	2 255	1 670	600	1 620 "

¹⁾ In this row I Vang's harvest has been included, since she had barns in common with Ai Som. The area belonging to both has naturally been considered in the calculations. Unfortunately, I could not find out how much of the surplus went to I Vang.

Later on the rice is transported from the barns to the village, and it is carried then in large rice baskets. These vary somewhat in size, and their height can be from 60–70 cm. and the diameter of the opening from 40–70 cm. The bottom is square, and the sides vary from 20–35 cm. The variation of capacity lies between 90–160 liters of rice. Since the specific weight of the Lamet rice is estimated at about 0.5, the weight of a full basket can vary between 45–80 kg. However, on the longer stretches the rice baskets are not so full. Since the distance from the barns to the village seldom exceeds from 3–4 km., even a rather heavy burden can be managed. A relatively small amount of rice is required daily, and the contents of one basket can last a number of days, so it is not necessary to go to the barns so very often.

When the rice arrives in the villages it must be husked. If this should be during the rainy season, it must be dried in the sun if possible, for it is easier to husk dry rice. From the calculations I made in the field by noting the time required for different amounts of rice, I obtained the figures that a woman husks 3.54 liters of paddy per hour, which results in 2.53 kg. husked rice. If we then take a village with an average of 6.5 persons to a household (Mokala Panghay has 6.7, see tab. 4), this household needs 1.34 kg. per day. And in order to husk this quantity, 32 min. are required. If we calculate the working day of a woman to be 12 hours, this means that she needs 4.45 % of her day for husking rice.

These figures are based on the fact that the average person eats 0.55 kg. unhusked rice per day, which equals 0.205 kg. husked. This consists of 1 600 calories.

The average harvest per hektar within the different sections assumes quite a variation. The difference between maximum and minimum is 570 kg., which is after all somewhat more than 50 % of the minimum. Thus the two poorest sections of land lie adjacently and in the northern half of the swidden, and the best part is in the south west section. It is possible that this has some connection with poor soil, or perhaps I Noi's southern position was favorable. Her land was quite level, without any mounds or sharp declines.

The greatest variation occurs in connection with surplus. It is obvious that this is to a large extent dependent upon the amount of effective working power a family has, and its relation to the number of mouths to be fed. The village chief had the least surplus, which is quite natural since he has the largest family with the least ability for clearing. In his family less clearing per grown person has been done than elsewhere, and besides, his average harvest is relatively poor, and his consumption for the year the greatest of all. This should naturally result in a small surplus. Ai Som is an example of the reverse, having the greatest surplus, but this is not only due to the fact that he is particularly capable, but because of two fields being included in this group. A remarkably large surplus has fallen to house group no. XIX, which is represented by I Noi. Only three women work on this field. They have cleared above the average, and besides, they had the best harvest. Moreover, their consumption for the year is quite small.

These different families represent to some extent different types, and it is possible that certain conclusions can be drawn from this, if a comparison is made with the rest of the material. Here the question is if there is such a thing that could be called the optimum of enterprise, that is, the ideal composition of a family, that would be as economical as it is possible to be. It is evident that the greater the working capacity within a family, the larger the surplus will be. But this working capacity is not a constant thing, but must be created gradually. Thus it would be interesting if one could follow the growth of a single family, and its relation to the surplus, and distinguish the factors that influence this. The surplus, the use of which I have accounted for in another chapter, is of course one of the driving forces of the Lamet, and with this standard as a point of departure, we can assume that the size and form of a family attempt to fit in with the prevailing values and interests.

Naturally no significant surplus can be expected of a family like that of the village chief, since the relations between the fully able-bodied and the

consumers so to speak is not economical for the moment. In the first place, he had an old lady of 85 to feed, and in the second, seven children under the age of fifteen, none of which could be expected to perform any effective work. One of his wives was fully capable of working, while the other had a child 3 months old, which kept her occupied. Therefore the latter did not do much work on the swidden, but was instead bound to the home and its duties. Cooking and husking fell to her lot, but this, on the other hand, freed the wife of first rank from household work, and she could devote most of her time to agriculture. I often visited the chief's family out on the swidden, and was able to observe this division of work. The younger wife was continually occupied with the husking of rice and looking after the children, while the older one was out on the swidden. The younger woman almost struck one as being servant-girl to the other. At the moment when my observations were made, this family was at what one might call a low juncture in relation to the surplus. When the children grow up, the effectivity of the family should certainly increase, and along with it the surplus. A period of five years is perhaps not capable of making any great effect, but let us say ten years from then; the working strength of the family should then be quite effective, if it has continued to keep together. At that age the father of the family should be able to count on a large surplus, and enter upon a more well-to-do stage of life. It is conceivable, to be sure, that still more children have come into the world at that time, and that some of the daughters have married, resulting in the loss of some of the working power of the family, but this is replaced by the bride price, or more correctly, the difference between the bride price and the dowry. On the other hand, new offspring should have arrived in the family, but this cannot affect the situation to any great extent.

Tapia's family did not work together on his field. His eldest son together with his wife and child were on another swidden, and besides, I Vang, his 20 year old daughter, had a field of her own. However, the seven people belonging to this swidden with the exception of old Tapia himself, were fully capable of work, yet they did not have an exceptionally large surplus, if we compare it with that of houses XIII and XIX, but this can be due to the unusually poor harvest. This family represents an old extended family, in the process of dissolving. The eldest son, who has a field apart from the family, is about to found his own house and break away from his father's group. If he had remained it is quite probable that the family's surplus would have been decidedly increased. I Vang was working for herself and getting ready to marry. But in spite of all this, the family's surplus

was really not so bad. This family is an example of a Lamet family in quite another stage of development than that of the chief.

The families of both Ai Nhi and I Noi resemble each other to a certain extent in that the whole working strength is made up of only women, in one case four in number (No. XIII) and in the other three (No. XIX). Moreover, they have had a good harvest, and only one of the families has two non-working members to feed, for which reason also their surplus was large. Ai Nhi's family represents an old family in disintegration. He has had no less than three daughters that have died, and a son as well who went to Chiangmai in Siam many years ago and never returned. Besides, his wife of first rank is also dead. Due to the fact that the old housefather has got himself a wife of second rank, or rather has remarried, and has as well a full-grown daughter and a daughter-in-law whose only daughter is 14 years of age, the family manages exceedingly well. In house No. XIX all the members are able-bodied, and the family consists of two widows and a full-grown unmarried daughter. This is evidently what remains of a disintegrated family, who manages very well, however.

As these examples show, and in spite of the inconsiderable number of them, we have observed several illustrative cases of family economy in different stages of development. Naturally, these statistical cases are altogether too few to base any far-reaching conclusions on, but they are undoubtedly of interest in that they portray the situation in which a few families stand. Even if I have not made a note of measurements in the same way elsewhere among the Lamet, it seems to me that the variation cannot be so particularly great, and for this reason my few examples here can at least give an idea of the economy of a swidden group. It would of course have been interesting to have had detailed bookkeeping on how consumption takes place, and how the surplus is used in these cases, but this, unfortunately, was technically impossible. Instead, I must refer to the viewpoints appearing in chapter 14. My assumption that a large co-operative group is essential for the Lamet is not contradicted by these figures. Their economy is evidently planned with the aim so distant, that not until a man reaches the age of 55, has he, together with his family, reached a certain economic standard. As we see in Ai Som's family, it is possible, during the early years when the parents are in their best years and have few children, to produce a large surplus. But when the number of children increases the surplus decreases, and a long period of years follows as the children grow up before the surplus curve turns

upward again, and possibly remains somewhat constant. Even if the family disintegrates, the surplus does not seem to decrease noticeably.

As I have mentioned before, the refuse from rice is used for feeding the pigs. Accordingly, I shall give an example of what can be obtained in refuse from a given quantity of rice that is husked. I took measurements of 18 liters of unhusked rice, which a woman of 40 years of age husked in one hour and 52 minutes. She obtained from this quantity 7.8 liters of white rice, and 3.5 liters of bran, which went to the small pigs. 4.25 liters of coarse husks were obtained, and 6.4 of the finer husks, which the full-grown pigs were given. The husks are called *nkām rā*, and the bran *nkām krn'om*.

It is difficult to get an idea of how the Lamet calculate their work, their production of rice and its consumption. If one questions a Lamet on this point, he is unable to give an exact answer, but merely says that he does as he is used to doing. Everything must go according to experience, so to speak, in about the same way as a housewife or an experienced cook calculates how much is needed in housekeeping, or how much seasoning is required in a certain dish. In this connection certain approximate units of measurement are used, peculiar to each person, and calculated according to experience. Thus the Lamet have for example baskets, which are used as a measure in selling unhusked rice. These vary in capacity, and are used only for a certain kind of produce, and by a certain person or a certain household. They know with certainty also, how many sowing-baskets are needed in sowing a certain area of the swidden. All estimation of this kind is made freely, according to accustomed habit.

It is quite evident that if one intends to clear the forest for a swidden, one must know how much land is needed in order to get the best possible production. This is naturally dependent first of all on the amount of work a man and his family are able to do, that is, their capacity and working time. If he wants a larger swidden than he can manage, he must hire working power, and if he has too little to do, he can help others instead, and get paid for his work. These two things cancel each other within the community, as long as the pay is not too little. Payment is generally made in the form of working days of help in clearing, or according to a certain measure of rice. It has to be calculated if this measure corresponds to the work performed, or whether it is too little, with the employer getting the best of the deal.

Another thing to be taken into consideration is the relation of quantity in regard to the various products of cultivation to the question of time.

For example, if a particular variety of rice is sown in too large a quantity, perhaps there is not enough time for harvesting this before it falls to the ground, and then the other varieties are delayed. Therefore the Lamet take pains in sowing several varieties that ripen successively. Working time is thus decided by the period required for ripening, and the working power and surface of land by the variety in question. In this connection we must remember that certain varieties are considered more valuable than others. It is usually the case that first of all a little of the fast-growing variety of rice is wanted, so that the new harvest can be tasted of as early as possible. When this happens, cucumbers and other vegetables can help out on the menu. Then the important and valuable varieties follow. Since the harvest must be put off until the rice is absolutely ripe, the time for harvesting naturally becomes very limited. Red peppers, tobacco, root crops and aromatic plants are not so dependent on a quick harvest, and these are gathered between whiles when it is suitable. Besides, the cultivation of things of this kind is relatively little.

In the preceding I have already discussed the question of surplus, but have not as yet taken one important factor into consideration, namely, to what extent outside working power can pay in this connection. At times the Lamet make use of help in agriculture. The number of working days are noted by means of charcoal marks on the rafters. I counted no less than 43 such marks in Tapía's house. These indicated the working days devoted to harvesting. Unfortunately, it is impossible for me to make any exact calculation for the profitableness of the using of outside working power, but we can very well imagine that if a man happened to get a very good harvest one year, and a large surplus accordingly, this could be used the following year to pay hired help, if it had not been sold.

Since some of the harvest of rice goes to commerce, we might wonder how the Lamet can calculate how to keep enough for consumption and sowing, and do not sell more than they can afford to. Here as well, experience must assert itself. The housewife knows how much of the contents of the grain bins goes to food and how much to sowing, and she has her way of noting these. But in spite of this habit of estimating quantities, which undoubtedly exists, it happens anyhow that the Lamet now and again sell more than they can afford to.

CHAPTER 14.

Use of Resources

We have now come so far in our presentation of the domestic economy of the Lamet, that we have observed how the processes of production are carried on. The products are ready for use, and we shall now proceed to an observation of how these are consumed, exchanged and made use of, and what their various functions are in the community life of the Lamet. Before entering an account of this, however, we must first consider what form proprietary rights take in regard to natural resources, in order to understand later on the ownership and administering of the finished products. I have already pointed out in the chapter on agriculture that among the Upper Lamet every village has its particular territory, while on the contrary, there are no determined boundaries among the Lower Lamet. Since the Lamet have an unlimited stretch of land, and since this land belongs to the whole village, no land disputes arise. The territory of the village is open for all its members. They fetch all that they need from the forest, and there also they can make clearings for their fields. However, I have never succeeded in getting quite clear how they go about dividing up the various plots of earth. The Lamet maintain that each one clears the plot that he considers to be best. But in spite of this, there must be some kind of apportioning of the land. It is of course easy to perceive that first of all the land is not equally valuable when divided up. The Lamet themselves distinguish between the various qualities of earth, and in the second place, the forest supply can consist of various varieties and various stages of growth. Old forest with trees having tall trunks can be very difficult to chop down, and if a district is covered with bamboo, a single woman can quickly clear a large surface of land. Besides, distance plays quite a part. Thus it would be quite remarkable if there were not some method of distributing the portions. Even if they are not used more than one year at a time, it is possible for example that people with greater authority, like a *lem* family, have the privilege of choosing a piece of land of good quality that lies near the village. I have cross-examined the Lamet in regard to this, but have never got the matter quite clear. Even if the forest be-

longing to the village is common ground, it does not follow that the whole village owns the products of their work in common. These belong to the one who has cleared and cultivated the swidden, in the same way that a man who has made an implement becomes the owner of it. In this connection two principles that are very common in primitive law hold good, namely, that the one who uses a thing has the right to use it, and the one who produces a thing owns it. But both of these principles can be combined. For example, a village drum is owned by someone, or more correctly, the wooden frame of the drum is owned by the person who made it, but the whole village has the right to use it. This combination does not always make its appearance, however, for most implements are owned privately, and are used only by the owners. A man who has planted a tree owns it, as well as its products.

Once I happened to ask a little boy if I might have some fruit from a tamarind tree that stood in the middle of the village square in Mokala Panghay. The boy fetched some fruit for me. This performance was repeated on several of the days that followed, and no one made any objection. However, one day I thought that the boy ought to have something for the trouble he had taken, but then the man who owned the tree came to me immediately and said that it was really he who should have been given the present, since it was his tree. Thus, as long as I helped myself to some of the fruit now and then without paying for it, it did not matter at all, but the minute I offered a present, the fruit assumed a particular value, and the owner protested. Among the Lamet, each fruit tree has its particular owner, but there is nothing to prevent anyone from picking fruit now and then, and the owner makes no objection. However, should he set a certain value on the tree and do business with the fruit, then the whole thing assumes a different aspect. This is a rather common principle, as a matter of fact, among a number of primitive tribes. The well-known hospitality among the North American Plains Indians for example, has often been confused in older literature with a lack of proprietary rights or communism. The use of fruit trees must be regarded from this point of view as well. Taking a small advantage of a fruit tree for personal consumption is a thing of no importance, but as soon as the fruit is given a certain commercial value, the taking of the fruit is looked upon as theft. However, certain fruits are an exception to this rule, such as betel nuts and bananas. The latter make up an important part of the food of the Lamet, and the former are an important commercial ware, the supply of which is very scarce within the Lamet villages.

Since ownership is partially combined with the principle that the one who produces a thing owns it, a correlation must therefore exist between the production, that is the working process of a thing, and the owning of it. In this connection then, one should do as I have done in chapter 12, that is, distinguish between different types of working processes, and thus we must take into consideration those who take part in the processes of production, whether it is a private group that produces a thing in common, or whether it is a matter of exchange of work between different groups.

Thus we can take the first example of an undifferentiated work, as when women gather wild plants. Here there is no direct exchange of work, and no exchange of products either. Yet practically there will occur a certain distribution of the resources, since one among the group of gatherers can perhaps find a place that is good or perhaps better than what the others have found, and this place will be taken advantage of by the whole group, and in this way the resources are divided among all of them. What each woman gathers individually is later consumed respectively by the different families.

In hunting one man lays a trap or brings down game, but he needs the help of several others in bearing home his prey, and in the slaughtering of animals, and perhaps even in the preparing of meat. The hunter owns the animal he kills, but he is obliged to divide up the meat first of all between all the men who have helped him, and besides, he must give a bit to every family. The case is the same in slaughtering. If I slaughter a pig, I am obliged to give away nearly half of it to those who help me, and on top of that I must give a bit to all the families I am acquainted with. In this connection a constant exchange takes place between the hunters and the families they have relation to.

Cattle are owned privately by the various families. Buffaloes are considered to be exclusively masculine property, and pigs belong partly to men and partly to women. In a divorce case I heard it mentioned that the woman had been allowed to take some of the pigs, since she had brought a pig along as dowry. Besides, the pigs are taken care of mostly by women, so it is possible that this is the reason for their being considered to be partly the property of the women. This is a point which I did not get quite clear. However, in slaughtering these larger animals, the meat is distributed among all in the village, and this refers especially to the occasions when buffaloes are slaughtered for the great sacrifice feasts for the ancestors' spirits. The products of agriculture are chiefly the result of the labor of a house group, and help obtained from others is reciprocated



Fig. 125. Pigsty in Mokala Panghay. The pigs are kept in the sty at night and there is an upper story where chicken coops are placed.

or paid with rice. Cultivated products are never given away as presents, however, and rice is also kept for the family's own use, for consumption or for selling. This is likewise the case with the other products of agriculture, although they are of decidedly less value than rice. I shall return later on to the special uses of rice.

Other products, like implements, belong either to the family in common, or to a private owner. The implements used in cultivation are considered to be the property of the family, and hunting implements, net bags, musical instruments, etc. are owned by those who have made them and who use them.

Houses are built by the greater part of the inhabitants of a village in common, and here, also, an exchange of work takes place, which is repaid measure for measure at some other time. The house is owned by the housefather.

From this analysis we see that there is a certain difference between the products of agriculture and those derived from other activities, and besides, that the property law and usage in regard to these products are connected to some degree with those who have taken part in the processes of making them.

So far we have seen how the natural resources are distributed, and how exchange of work has proceeded, and now we shall see how the finished products are administered, i. e., exchanged and consumed. In order to study

this, however, it is not enough to only investigate the management of everyday life. A part of the products goes to food, and is consumed within the family, and part goes to export, that is, to the buying of necessities which cannot be produced at home. A third part goes to taxes, which, however, are taken out in the form of wage work and has no connection with the subject on hand. Finally we have a fourth category, in which we can include gifts and exchange on certain important events of life, and a fifth which consists of the surplus which is used as sacrifice for the spirits and as a means of acquiring prestige. In order to get a clear view of all this, we must first give an account of the family's use of its resources.

The Family as an Economic Unit

The house group is purely and simply the key organization in the entire community life of the Lamet. The most important part of production is managed by this group, and the case is the same with consumption as well. In the preceding we have observed the various actions of this group in community life, and how the make-up of a family changes, its origin, its life, disintegration and death, and now we are about to investigate how the average family disposes of and manages its resources.

The family produces implements and food for its own use, and distributes these things among its members. It decides how much work shall be done, how large a piece of land shall be cleared, how much of the different kinds of plants shall be raised, and later on how much shall be consumed, exchanged, or saved for the winning of prestige. The family is a kind of gathering center for products and capital, and from this center all clearing and distribution radiates. Since the products are not only to be used as food, nor for the family's immediate consumption, a sort of tug-of-war arises in the matter of the distribution of the necessities. A decision must be made on how much they can afford to eat up, and how much can be saved for other purposes. If the housefather wishes to win prestige or increase what he already has, he must make inroads upon the capital collected, and he is in a constant dilemma about how much can be used for this or the other thing. I cannot give a clear account of how this is done in reality. As I already mentioned in the last chapter (see pp. 292-293) it is possible that the Lamet can calculate according to habit and experience, approximately how much can be sold, and how much should be consumed, and how much can remain for sowing. However, uncertainty has always the upper hand, which is forthcoming in the rites

performed for the soul of rice. It is evident that the Lamet are unable to make exact calculations. The magic treatments are thus relied upon for reinforcing the lack of rational knowledge. By taking good care of the soul of rice "the rice does not come to a quick end in the barns."

It is primarily the housefather and the wife of first rank that look after the supply. The housewife decides how much food is to be prepared, and how it is to be distributed. She knows just about how much rice should be needed for everyday use, and how much should be husked for a supply that can last a few days, and which varieties are liked most. Therefore the housefather alone is unable to decide whether any rice can be sold, and he must consult his wife of first rank, since she is the one who has charge of the consumption and distribution of the rice needed as food. When one buys rice in a Lamet village, it can never be bought from a man, but one must apply to the one in charge of the household. If we should ask a woman we meet carrying a basket of paddy, how many days it should last, she can answer the question immediately. She points out how much of the contents of the basket disappears when the rice is husked, and if we ask her how much that will be when cooked, she can answer again. If we then ask her how much rice each member of her family requires daily, she takes up a rice box and tells us that the box belongs to a certain member of the family, and he is allowed to eat as much as the box can hold. The size of the ricebox for each one is actually decided according to the quantity he is in the habit of consuming every day. As a matter of fact, it is very important that just the right amount needed daily is cooked, since cooked rice cannot be kept in hot weather. Cooked rice that remains over to the next day is not pleasant to eat, for it gets a peculiar taste. But if there should happen to be some left over, it is usually given to the domestic animals, or it is used in the making of rice wine. The preparation of rice wine and its distillation is taken care of by the women.

The food of the Lamet does not consist only of rice. This is the main food, and it is difficult to state what per cent of the whole it makes up, since this is a matter that changes somewhat during the different periods of the year. During the months when access to cultivated and wild edible plants is to be had, these replace to a large extent a part of the portion of rice. By means of the scheme on pp. 166-169, we can study this variation of resources as compared with the work carried on during the year. The most difficult period of the whole year, as pointed out previously, is the hot spring that precedes the monsoon rains. At that time there is practically no other food to be had than rice and a little dried meat. But as

soon as the rains begin, all kinds of edible plants send forth shoots, and at this time the nutritious bamboo shoots make up an important part of the food of the Lamet. This refers to the greater part of the rainy period, but particularly to the first half of it. At this time, access to fish and game is increased, and for this reason the supply of rice can be saved considerably. As a matter of fact, the rice begins to decrease noticeably at this time, and it becomes a problem to keep from doing away with so much that there is nothing left over for sowing. Cultivated fruits are to be had during the whole of the rainy season and far into the autumn, but as a rule these are not such an important means of nutrition, except for bananas. This fruit is raised in such a way, that there is access to the fruit practically all year long, and it makes up a rather important ingredient in the diet of the Lamet. However, it seems to be children mostly who eat bananas. The wild banana that grows in all the damp mountain pockets, is one of the more important wild edible plants. The bud- or spoolshaped part of this plant, formed by the sterile supporting leaves of the inflorescence (*brachteae*), is very much in demand, and is used as a kind of salad or as a vegetable in soup. Besides, the Lamet often take home branches of the wild banana for the pigs. This is an important item in the diet of the tame pigs of the village. Thus the rainy season is a time when the scanty supply of rice can be spared, and the diet supplanted with other vegetable and animal foods. Even when the harvest is ready, or more correctly, while the harvest is in progress, there are a great many kinds of cultivated plants to be had. The period when most rice is eaten is really from January up to the rainy season in the beginning of June.

It is chiefly the wife of first rank who has charge of all the vegetable food as well as the supply of rice. On the other hand, it is the men who look after the animal part of the diet. Dried meat is kept in the private *cong* or sometimes in the community house, and the housefather is the one who decides how much meat is to be eaten. Fish cannot be preserved, and since the Lamet do relatively little fishing, the fish diet is of no great consequence. Fish can be regarded mostly as a chance article of diet. Besides vegetables and rice, as well as aromatic plants, the Lamet always eat some meat, either dried meat that is roasted over the coals or dried meat that is cooked in soups. It is only at the sacrificial rites, or on occasions when game is captured, that the Lamet eat fresh meat. On such occasions the meat is prepared as a rule in the community house or in a private *cong*, where it is chopped fine together with spices of various kinds, so that it results in something like gruel. It is then eaten raw either with

a spoon or with the fingers. The Lamet consider meat prepared in this way to be food worthy only of a feast.

Their everyday food consists chiefly of rice and dried meat that has been roasted, as well as various vegetables, which are usually cooked. A popular dish is soup cooked of dried meat and a number of vegetables and spiced with a good deal of red pepper. This soup is very often cooked in bamboo tubes, and in order to get the vegetables to go to pieces quickly, they are mashed in the soup with a kind of stick that is dented along the sides, or with a twirl-whisk, which is generally used for the *brachteae* of the banana. If there is access to fresh meat, it is preferably roasted. Fish is always roasted. An exception, however, is dried and smoked fish, which can sometimes be bought from other tribes. This fish is cooked. However, it is exceedingly seldom that the Lamet buy this kind of fish.

As we see from the description given here, it is the housewife's business to see that the supplies of food can last, and spare where she can, and further, she must distribute the resources she has converted to food in such a way that all are more or less satisfied. While the housewife has charge of the vegetable resources, and the preparation of food in general and its distribution to all the members

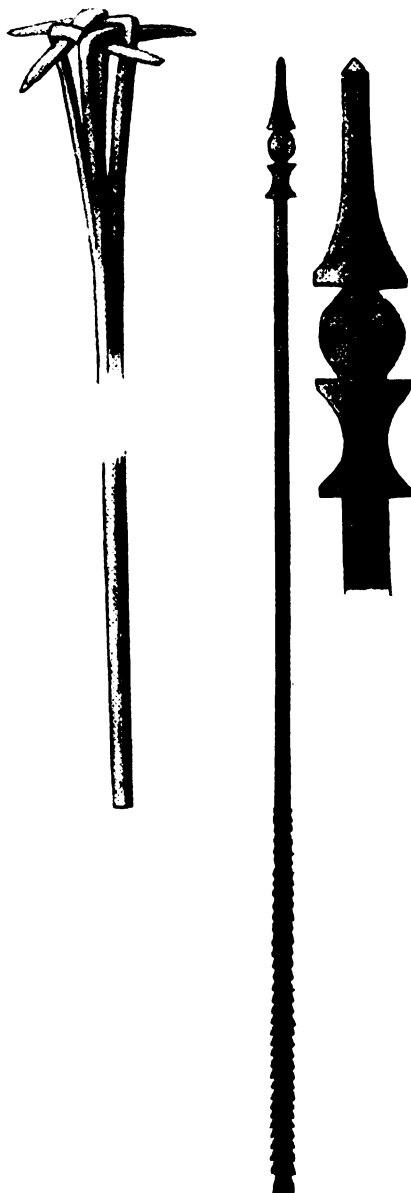


Fig. 126. To the left, twirl-whisk (length 36 cm.). To the right, pound utensil (length 91 cm.).

of the household, the housefather looks after the supply of meat. Further, the housewife must arrange for the feeding of the domestic animals, that is, the pigs and chickens, and besides, she can use a certain amount of rice and other grains for the production of rice wine. In a Lamet household of good standing there should always be a number of earthen vessels on hand, filled with rice wine, as well as some bottles of brandy, for rather large quantities of alcoholic drinks are consumed at all the sacrificial ceremonies, whether they are held for demons of illness or for other spirits. The Lamet make use of every opportunity for drinking intoxicating liquor. Thus we often see the older women sitting beside distillation apparatuses in the dwellings, and producing firewater.

This apparatus for distilling is very simply constructed. A common earthen vessel used for cooking rice is used as a steamer, and a gourd with a perforated bottom is placed in this. Here the alcoholic vapours are collected and led through a bamboo tube down to an ordinary bottle or gourd, which either stands in cold water or is constantly dosed with cold water. The distillation progresses very slowly, and the apparatus must be watched constantly, and it is usually elderly women who occupy themselves with this task.

I have not succeeded in calculating the quantities of rice, millet, coix and eleusine that make up the receipt. The earthen vessel used for storing the rice wine can hold from 10–15 liters. Pure rice wine is never distilled, but the other grains are included as well, and their husks are laid in the jug for fermentation, and when this process is completed, only water is poured over them. When all the wine in the jug has been sucked out, the mash is given to the pigs.

Rice is not only used as an item of food, but it is an important article for commercial purposes, as we shall see further on. Rice is exchanged for the iron implements, pottery and clothes needed in the family, and if there is a surplus after this, it is a means for accumulating the articles of luxury used at feasts for the ancestors. The goal for the labor of a family is not only to supply the family with food and necessary implements, as well as seeing that the various spirits are taken care of, but the greatest interest in life is the goal that all the Lamet strive for, namely the acquiring of prestige and becoming rich enough to be looked upon as *lem*. In order to reach this goal, all the resources must be weighed in the balance. The housewife must save rice in such a way that, the greatest possible surplus can be attained, and thus a constant strife between consumption and saving goes on. The greater the amount of rice that can be



Fig. 127. The rice has to some degree fermented in a basket and now is transferred to a wine jar for final fermentation. The young pigs are fed with bran.

saved, that is, the less eaten, with other articles of diet replacing it, the greater can the capital saved be, and consequently the buying power can become greater also. It is first and foremost rice that must be saved, since according to tradition rice is the most important means of exchange with other tribes.

In order for the family to gain prestige, it is the housefather's business to co-ordinate the work of his family. Prestige is acquired through sacrifice to his ancestors, and it is the housefather who is to become a *lem*. The house and the buffalo belong to him, and it is he who owns and decides everything concerning the house. Thus it is of importance for him to have a family with as many able-bodied members as is possible. The foremost resource for capital among the Lamet is really the working power of a family, and the larger a family is, the greater the surplus should be. However, a family cannot have constant working ability for a whole generation,

for children cannot take part in the heavy work of clearing. I have already shown how the number of family members can change, and how the working strength of a family is related to production. Also, work can be divided up among the members of a family of some size, and a co-operative group can be more effective. In order to get as many working hands as possible, a family must therefore arrange to give birth to as many children as they can. The best means for doing this, according to the Lamet themselves, is to have an extra wife. However, in order to manage this, a man must work so hard that he is able to collect enough capital for the bride price. Since he is already married, it is not so easy to undergo service marriage. Therefore a second wife should preferably be paid for with money or other things of value. When a man has got so far that he has succeeded in getting a second wife, his possibilities for acquiring a greater surplus of production are increased, not only because a second wife means an extra pair of working hands, but also because the organization of the work will become more effective. If we assume that there are children in the house that must be looked after, for example, one of the wives can take care of the work to be done at home at the same time that she looks after the children, and thus the other is free to do work outside the village. Later on when the children grow up, the working power is increased from year to year. And if one of the daughters should marry, the housefather either receives a bride price, or the son-in-law comes to work for him for a number of years. A combination of both these things is perhaps most usually the case. On the other hand, the housefather is obliged to find a wife for his son. This is of course an investment of capital as well, which should gradually bear fruit. But the danger is that the son might break away from the family as soon as he gets children. However, it is very difficult to calculate exactly how the branching out of a family can correspond to an increase in what it can save. A thing like this is connected with a great many different factors, such as the performance of work, its intensity, the ability to manage a house, etc. All this can be quite individual, which the Lamet also point out. One of my friends in Mokala Panghay called my attention to the difficulty in getting a good wife. He said that some women were very industrious, but they had no ability to save, while again others were lazy, and barely got together enough rice to keep them from going hungry. In one case a man had divorced his wife for the simple reason that she was a poor worker. I must add here that the man himself was not over-energetic.

Some of the surplus of production is used in buying buffaloes. These

animals are considered to be one of the most important objects in the investment of capital. If things go well, they multiply each year, but on the other hand they must be sacrificed now and then to the ancestor spirits, and they are the means of paying a bride price. Besides, there is always a certain amount of uncertainty about buffaloes, since it often happens that the calves are killed by tigers.

It is chiefly rice that serves as a means of exchange. In paying for work, payment is made with rice, and the case is the same in commerce. Buffaloes only give prestige, and their meat must be distributed after the slaughtering takes place during the great ancestral feasts to all in the village. In regard to being a means of exchange, these important animals assume the rule only in the case of marriage.

When a man has become so successful that he owns several buffaloes, he is in a position to buy a bronze drum. This article is considered to be equal in value to four buffaloes. But there are other articles of great value as well, such as gongs, silks and Chinese porcelain, that is to say, all those things that are used for the ancestral feasts and for the bride price. Most of these things are bought with the results of the sale of rice.

If a man has been fortunate enough to collect several buffaloes, and some of the luxuries referred to above as well, he can get a wife who is rich. She then takes along with her as dowry, when the marriage takes place, a number of luxury articles by means of which the husband's prestige is increased.

After still further efforts at saving, the man we describe has attained a wealth consisting of at least a couple of bronze drums, a number of buffaloes, and many articles of luxury. Thus he attains the rank and dignity of *lem*, and his goal is reached. When this occurs, he is in a position to invite the whole village to buffalo meat at the feast of ancestors, as well as food and liquor, and he can honor the spirits of his ancestors as they should be honored, and the more he sacrifices to these spirits, the more powerful they become, and he receives in equal measure blessings in the form of good health and wealth for himself and his family. It is possible that because of his high standing he obtains other rights as well. He receives a little income on the side by acting as intermediary in disputes, and moreover, a *lem* always receives a larger portion of meat when game is divided up, and when domestic animals are slaughtered.

The house group of the Lamet disintegrates rather quickly. When one of the sons increases his family, he soon decides to found his own household with his own little family, and thus the working unit is split

up. When a housefather dies, the property of the family is divided among the sons. If a man has more sons than he has bronze drums, these are owned jointly, or they are apportioned as the father has instructed. Unfortunately my information about inheritance rights is very limited. In any case, I managed to establish the fact that fortunes are divided up when inherited, and since families along with fortunes are continually being split up, there cannot very well be any constant fortune that remains within one family. I got the impression that to a great extent every family must work itself up in order to reach the position of rank known as *lem*.

We gather from this general view that the whole family works as an important economic unit, for both production and consumption, and that its most important aim is to run the house, work and save in order to attain wealth, partly for the purpose of reaching a good position socially, and partly for standing on good terms with the ancestor spirits. The whole community life of the Lamet circulates round these things, all their economic activity, their relations with other people, and their relation to the supernatural world.

The Grouping of Commodities, and Consumption and Saving

So far we have got some idea how consumption and saving proceed within the family group, which is the most important social unit among the Lamet. Consumption takes place, naturally, outside the family group as well, for example, when guests are invited to the village, or at feasts. However, I shall go into this in connection with the exchange of necessities that occurs among the Lamet.

We have also noticed something else, namely, that there is a certain grouping of the articles of consumption, due to the fact that different values have been attached to them. This is connected with the fact that the various necessities have different functions. Some of these commodities are intended for immediate consumption, and again, others like rice are divided up for consumption and for exchange. In other words, the latter group has a selling value as well. This is of course a very important difference, and we gather quite clearly from the example related about the tamarind tree on page 295, that the owner made a distinction between the use of the fruit on the spot for consumption, and its selling value.

Thus we can include all kinds of wild plants in the one group, as well as a number of cultivated ones, which are intended for immediate consumption. These are never sold. The case is the same with fish, caught by

the Lamet themselves, as well as meat. A living animal has a certain selling value, but it is otherwise with a slaughtered animal or with dried meat.

Since rice has a particular selling value, this article is saved in order to increase the buying power, and an effort is made to replace this article of diet as far as is possible with other things that have no selling value. It follows then, that the more wild plants, meat and fish can be obtained and used, the greater the surplus of rice can be. At the same time, it is not desirable to devote so much time and labor to other things as to rice itself. One can say that rice attracts greater interest and working effort, and the other resources get to be regarded as a sort of important by-product. In other words, a certain balance comes into existence between the quantity of labor devoted to rice, and that devoted to the other products. However, the latter do not require so much care and effort as rice does, and they are either seasonal things like plants, or they are things to which access can be had for the greater part of the year, even though somewhat unreliable. This regards the results of hunting and fishing, for example, which are a gamble to some extent. Concerning the meat of domestic animals, this can also be looked upon as a kind of by-product to be had at festivals. Domestic animals are not allowed to be slaughtered other than in connection with sacrifice. Cultivated plants as well, excepting rice, come under this category.

Thus we obtain a certain scale of values and a grouping of commodities, when investigating the consumption and saving of the Lamet. As we shall see later on, there is still another kind of valuation of commodities, possible based on another scale, when it is a question of the selling value of different commodities.

Returning to the subject of rice, a part of this is to be consumed, and another part is to be saved. That which is to be consumed immediately is of course that needed for food and wine, and in this case both people and animals get the benefit of it. One third of the rice must be laid aside for sowing. What is left over can be used then for selling. In regard to this, I refer to my calculations in chapter 13.

We shall now leave the subject of consumption, and study how rice is used in exchange. However, here we must take into consideration not only rice, but other things as well that are exchanged, and see what position rice has among these things. For this reason we should first get a view of the different forms of exchange which exist among the Lamet, and then see how the commodities group themselves according to their exchange value.

Barter and Trade

Exchange occurs in a number of different situations in the life of the Lamet within the villages themselves. In the preceding pages we have already studied the exchange of working power on different occasions. But work is often combined with feasts, when the working group is invited to food and drink. If a house is to be built, the owner of the house stands for the food for those who help. Eating and drinking takes place also on all occasions of sacrificial ceremony. If the medicine man performs a service, he is invited to eat and drink, and when the patient becomes well and is ready to undergo the *tukti* ceremony already described, this is also connected with eating and a lengthy drinking. When the great feasts for the whole village take place, all the families of the village contribute either money or commodities of various kinds. The usual procedure is that every family places money in a common fund, which is then used for buying the animals for the sacrifice, and the intoxicating liquor from various families of the village. When strangers are taken in, they are also invited to eat, usually by the *lem*, who always like to show off as fine fellows. One *lem* family contributes food, and another drinks on these occasions.

There is a good deal of discussion in anthropological literature about the exchange of ceremonial gifts between relatives of different kinds. This exists among the Lamet, and I have had the opportunity of observing it at funerals. However, since my stay among the Lamet has been of altogether too short duration, I have not succeeded in collecting enough material to get a clear idea of the obligations of kinship and the exchange of gifts in this connection.

If we examine the expenditures of the Lamet throughout life, we should find that the greatest sums go to the cult of ancestors and to the payments made in connection with the entrance into matrimony. The burial of parents is included in the former, since it is an expense of similar nature.

There are no immediate expenses worth considering in connection with the coming of a child into the world. No particular feast is held for the newborn. The mother must perform her work just as usual while the child is on the way, perhaps she even works harder, for the Lamet believe that this facilitates the birth. A woman is allowed to rest only one day after giving birth to her child, but she is tied to the village for a long time afterwards, and thus performs only lighter work. She must look after her child constantly, and the work on the swidden must wait until

the child can walk. It is quite evident that a thing like this has its effect on the life of production.

The next expense of considerable size is the exchange that takes place on entering into matrimony. As mentioned elsewhere, no special ceremonies are performed on such an occasion, but marriage is an important step from an economic point of view, since at that time an exchange of valuables takes place between families, and these valuables represent a long period of work and saving. By means of service marriage, the bridegroom places his working power at the disposition of his wife's family for a number of years, and the matter is not complete with this, for he must also pay the bride price with ready cash or with buffaloes, or possibly gongs and bronze drums. As far as the woman is concerned, she must have a dowry consisting of other valuables, such as silks, jewelry, etc. On this matter I refer to chapter 5. Thus the things that are exchanged at this time are such as have been the object of lengthy accumulation, and I got the impression that some of these things are considered to be masculine things, that is to say, the things that a man takes along as bride price, and others again are feminine. I shall soon return to this and point out what it is owing to.

The other expenses within the village are more incidental in character, and refer to gifts of food and the like. A certain exchange of implements occurs also. In fact, I quoted an example in a preceding chapter of how some older men had specialized in making baskets of various descriptions, and how they sold these within the village or to the members of neighboring tribes. Through this trading, relations of economic character already make their appearance between neighboring villages, and the case is the same concerning marriage relations, and most of all, all kinds of friendship ties.

All of the situations treated of here can be looked upon as normal. But a number of unexpected events can occur, such as sickness among animals, failure of crops, fire, disability, economic miscalculations, which also damage the economic situation.

It is undoubtedly true that the Lamet produce the greatest part of their food, their houses, and many implements. But in order to manage their life of production, they are dependent upon a number of necessities that they cannot produce themselves, and therefore these commodities must be obtained by means of trade with other tribes. The amount of trade that exists within the tribe, between individuals or families, is rather

insignificant, as already pointed out, since all of them produce the same articles. One exception can be named in this connection. Sleeping mats of bark cloth are made in the village of Hok Het, and these are sold to other villages. But this article has been made previously in all the other Lamet villages. Besides, this article is not much in demand, and its trade is decidedly insignificant. Bark cloth is sometimes used as a sort of protection for the naked back when carrying the heavy rice baskets, to prevent the latter from chafing the skin.

Trading with other tribes is of considerably greater importance. As I have pointed out several times, the Lamet are obliged to buy their iron axes. These are obtained partly from a village of smiths, Ban Don, just north of Xieng-Khong. The people of this village have come from a place having the same name, situated a few kilometers north of Luangprabang. Originally, however, they have moved down from the high plateaus of Tran-Ninh, and consider themselves to be kin of the Thai Phuén.

It is commonly the case, however, that the smiths themselves set out on trading trips, taking their finished products with them. These trading trips take place from a number of smiths' villages along the Mekong River, and follow its tributaries to the district of the mountain peoples. Their canoes are laden with iron wares. Sometimes the blacksmiths are contented with selling their wares to the Laotic merchants, who exchange the iron products for the products of the mountain folk. The time for this commerce is usually the first month following the completion of the harvest, when there is plenty of rice in the Lamet villages. This is just about the time when the Lamet are once more about to begin clearing new swiddens, and are very much in need of proper chopping knives. For a very long time the Lamet have been in the habit of trading rice for these iron implements. The Lao in the northern part of Mekong are craftsmen to a larger extent, and they combine this with the art of trading. They do not cultivate enough rice for their own consumption, but must buy up great quantities from the primitive mountain peoples. When the harvest is complete, merchants are in the habit of gathering at the mouths of rivers, or at certain places on the Mekong, where the mountain people come along with laden rice baskets. The rice is collected in barns on these temporary market places. Trading of rice has played quite an important part in these regions for a very long period of time, and Pavie¹⁾ mentions the great production of rice in just this district of the Lamet, the surplus of which is

¹⁾ Pavie, *op. cit.*, p. 140.

of such importance for the Laotic handicraftsmen, and for the large villages along the Mekong, and especially for Luangprabang.

This wish for such a surplus of rice that they can do business with the traders from Nam Tha and Mekong (see p. 252), is included in the prayers of the Lamet.

A certain change took place during the time of my stay among the Lamet. For years the Lamet had been accustomed to the regular arrival of the traders, but for some reason which the Lamet could not understand, none came the year that I was there. This caused quite a bit of surprise among the Lamet villages, and several men went down to Ban Don in Siam in order to buy the needed implements. But iron is difficult to freight by land, and on account of this trouble with transportation it was natural that no great amount of business was done. There was a Laotic village near the Nam Tha where the traders were in the habit of coming, and where there had originally been a kind of market place (see description of this on pp. 27-28).

One day I took a trip to this village and found out that the traders did not consider it worth while to go so far up the Nam Tha, when they could only get rice in exchange for their iron products. Rice was altogether too voluminous for the little canoes, and too expensive for its being worth freighting.

This revaluation of rice was probably due to two reasons. First, a connection by road had been established between Indochina's coast and Luangprabang, over which cheap Annamese rice could be freighted by trucks during the dry season. And secondly, the more prominent merchants had set motors in their canoes, and could thus buy cheap rice from the Siamese districts where there was a surplus. This had probably been the cause of sinking the price of rice, and therefore it did not pay to buy from the Lamet whose rice was expensive to freight, since the tributaries of the Mekong are navigable only for smaller canoes. Thus the Lao were no longer dependent on the rice production of the Lamet. The Laotic merchants considered it not worth their while now to buy their rice. If the Lamet had at least thought of selling some other product, like red pepper or cardamom, the trouble of transportation would have been worth while, I was informed by the merchants. They had tried to discuss with the Lamet about this and had suggested a change in their production, but they had not succeeded, for the Lamet were too much bound by tradition.

The Lamet were now obliged to sell their rice elsewhere. They made

the largest sales among the Lu in Tafá, since the latter were always in need of rice, for their rice fields were altogether too small for their big village. However, the price of rice was low only during the dry season. When the rainy period arrived and the roads to Laos were closed — they cannot hold out against the rains — the prices went up again. This development of events had been foreseen in time by some Chinese merchants in Houeisai, who seized the opportunity of buying up the surplus rice of the Lamet quite cheaply before the beginning of the rainy season. During the rainy period, when the supply began to get low, the Chinese merchants worked up the prices considerably. I observed the same phenomenon the following year in Upper Tonkin, where there was also a decided lack of rice during the rainy season, and where the merchants did likewise and sold the rice at a high price. Along with the increase of the price of rice, the price of other articles of food and necessities in Houeisai rose, and it was extremely difficult to get enough food for the population of Houeisai.

The French resident made an effort in this direction by setting maximum prices for the market place, with the result that nobody cared to sell products at the market, but sold them on the "black market," either directly to the villages or at temporary markets outside of Houeisai. Besides, many of the Lamet had sold more than they could afford to, since the price of their rice had sunk, and that of other commodities had been raised. Their need of iron products was the same as always, moreover. So there came to be a certain lack of rice in the Lamet district itself. On top of everything else, one of the larger villages burned down, barns and everything, and the whole supply of grain for sowing was destroyed. In order to avoid any more such calamities, the provincial government arranged for the building of a large community barn, to be had in common by all the people of the Lamet district in Tafá. Certain quantities of rice were then obligatorily moved away from the Lamet villages to this barn. This occurred at the end of my stay among the Lamet in January 1938, and unfortunately I have never found out what effect this institution had on the trading of rice.

When I left the Lamet, I travelled down to Luangprabang, and took the opportunity of visiting a blacksmith's village while there. The blacksmiths I spoke to there complained over the fact that they could not get hold of the steel they were accustomed to forging. They were in the habit of buying this from Siam. Meanwhile the French piaster had dropped — it was tied up with the franc — and as a result the price of

steel in Siam was altogether too high. They could not forge the French steel, since it was too hard as well as being altogether too expensive.

For some hundred years back the blacksmiths in these parts have been used to forging blister steel produced according to old-fashioned methods. Such steel is produced today at a few Swedish foundries, and this only for the purpose of export to the primitive blacksmiths of exotic lands. The Swedish export of this steel has been going on since the 17th century, and it has partially displaced the native production of steel. It was packed in small round casks, and the steel was in the form of rods about 20 cm. in length. The method of packing today is still the same as it was in the 17th century, and according to the information I got at the General Export Association of Sweden, the native blacksmiths are very conservative, and very particular that the packing is not changed in the slightest degree, and the case is the same in regard to stamps, etc. The small casks are for the purpose of easy transportation by means of pack horses, in order to be freighted along the caravan routes in the heart of South Asia. After getting this information, it was easy to trace the fact that the steel used by the Laotic blacksmiths was of Swedish origin, and consequently that the iron implements of the Lamet are made of Swedish steel. It is quite strange to see how far world commerce stretches its tentacles into the jungles, and in this case we also see how the Lamet have been influenced in their one-sided production of rice by economic fluctuations, such as the loss of value of the franc, and the opening of new roads of transportation. In the first place, it was certainly the fall of the French piaster that brought about the first displacement. The few iron implements that should have been produced rose in price, while rice, which made up the Lamet's most prominent means of exchange, dropped in value because of the improved conditions of transportation from the greater rice district during the dry period. It was just at this point of time that the Lamet were accustomed to selling their rice, for the harvest had recently been borne into the barns, and the price of their rice was at a rather low level since access to it was plenty.

The iron implements that the Lamet buy are chiefly forest or chopping knives, which are their universal tool, and which they are constantly in need of. These are worn down quickly, and must often be reforged, a thing which they cannot do themselves. Before the crisis, the normal price of a chopping knife was 30 cents = 3 francs in 1937. After the crisis the price was more than doubled. Besides chopping knives, they also purchase small iron spades, and sometimes even spearheads. This, as a matter of fact, is all that they use in the way of iron implements.

An important article for the Lamet is clothing. This is bought in Tafá, and what they buy is usually old worn clothing. It is extremely seldom that new clothes are bought. The price is about $\frac{1}{2}$ piaster a garment, or the corresponding amount of rice. The clothes are those made by the Lu. In Tafá the Lamet sell baskets as well as hides and some of their wax, but rice is the main article of exchange.

Another product that is much in demand among the Lamet is pottery. This is bought from Laotic merchants.

The salt used by the Lamet comes from the salt mines in Bo Tène, situated about 4 days' journey by foot east of Muong Sing, right near the Chinese border. The Lu have long made use of the salt mines in this tract, and they live to a great extent on the results of the sale of salt. The salt is soaked out and then cooked for evaporation. It is shaped into small square pieces about 20×15 cm. and several centimeters thick. It is then wrapped in banana leaves, and is sold in this standardized form. The salt is rather grey in color.

When the harvest is over, the Lamet generally set out for Bo Tène in order to buy salt, and sometimes they buy such quantities that they can sell to the neighboring villages. But other tribes as well take part in this trading of salt, and I once met a salt caravan consisting of a few Khmu men and women with baskets laden with salt bricquets. They passed the village of Sot Noi and remained there a short while in order to exchange their salt for husked rice. In this way they obtained food while on their way. About 1 liter of husked rice was paid for a piece of salt, or in other words, enough rice needed for one day's nourishment.

Besides this, the Lamet buy a great number of European articles such as cigar lighters of simple construction, cotton blankets, discarded felt hats, European bottles and diverse light wares. These things are bought in the bazaars in Houeisai or in Siam. This is about all that the Lamet buy in the way of articles of consumption.

The purchase of bronze drums, gongs and articles of luxury is a thing that occurs relatively seldom nowadays, and I have unfortunately never witnessed such a purchase, so I do not know how it is done. Most of these articles that are in existence are old inherited things.

Besides rice, the Lamet sell a number of other products, such as roe and deer hides, honey from wild bees as well as their wax. The last-named is used to a great extent for candles in the Buddhistic temples. In olden times taxes were paid in the form of wax to the princes in Muong Nan.¹⁾

¹⁾ Pavie, *op. cit.*, p. 147.

Further, as already pointed out, baskets are sold to the Lu as well as a certain quantity of rice brandy, since the Lu cannot distill themselves. There are smaller articles as well that the Lamet export, such as *mez*, that is the fermented leaves of wild tea, deer horns, and the dried gall bladders of bears. The two last-named articles are valued highly as drugs in Chinese pharmacy. Domestic animals are not often sold, and in case they were it would only be pigs that would be concerned here. However, the Lamet are not particularly skillful in raising pigs, and they can in no way compete with their neighbors the Mossü and Kha Khui, who are specialists in this respect. The most important article of export for the Lamet is without doubt rice, and we can certainly assert that the Lamet as well as the Khmu are the real specialists in the cultivation of rice in the mountain tracts of northern Laos, and they are the only ones who have exported it, or more correctly, who have cultivated it for selling purposes on a larger scale. This refers especially to the Lamet. According to what some older Lamet told me, however, wax has in former days been of considerable importance in trading.

The usual thing is that rice is used as a means of exchange for other products. Coin plays, however, a certain part today, just as in former times. Before the French occupied the country, Laotic and Siamese coins, consisting of small copper or silver billets were used, as well as Burman weights and even cowries to a certain extent.

Trading by other means than those accounted for here does not exist, and I have never heard of there being any specially trained business men who only occupy themselves with the matter of trading.

The Grouping of Commodities and Exchange

We gather from the account given here that some wares or products are exchanged within the tribe, and others outside it. Wild and cultivated plants, with the exception of rice, are not made use of as a means of exchange, but on the other hand, there is a regular distribution of meat from both wild and tame animals. The question of prepared food is another thing, for this is of course a means of exchange within the village, depending upon other sentiments and functions that are connected with prepared food and liquor. The article that is exchanged mostly outside the tribe is rice, the most important product of the Lamet. This serves as a kind of coin for trade outside the tribe, and further, in certain cases as a means of paying salaries within the tribe. It is a rather interesting and very

important difference, that rice is not distributed like meat. But it is the same with other plant products. It is difficult to decide what this is due to. I shall return to a discussion of this problem in a later connection. Wealth is accumulated in the form of buffaloes, bronze drums and other articles of luxury, and these things are exchanged on entering into matrimony. As we have seen in the foregoing (p. 102), there seems to be a division of articles into masculine and feminine categories. The men often contribute with buffaloes, bronze drums and gongs, in the matter of the bride price, while women bring silks, clothes and jewels, and perhaps a pig on some occasions, as dowry.

This grouping of commodities can be due to the fact that it is the men who look after the buffaloes, and that bronze drums are valued according to a certain number of buffaloes. As I have pointed out in chapter 13, I came across a case where a woman had her own particular swidden where she cultivated rice which she intended to exchange for clothing. It is possible that women bought silks and other articles of luxury in former days for what they themselves had produced on their private swiddens. Iron wares can also be included in a dowry, and thus these are likewise commodities that can be bought with rice. This is an indication that women have to a large extent had control over the selling of rice. It is they who, by their attempt at saving, have succeeded in managing the household in such a way that there could be a surplus, and it is the women who in the main are responsible for the supplies in the barns. It is they who also are in the habit of carrying the rice down to the Laotic villages. It is therefore possible that in spite of rice being the result of co-operation of both men and women, the women have the greater right of decision in this case. However, I have come across only one case where a woman had her own swidden, and no conclusions can be drawn in this connection. It only points in a certain direction, and nothing more. In the main I have not succeeded in getting clear how accumulation really takes place, but it is evident anyhow that rice is the usual means for attaining the ultimate capital. The Lamet pray for "surplus of rice" in their prayers to the soul of rice and the other supernatural spirits, and for "a hundred heaped baskets, and buffaloes with long horns and bronze drums with a pleasant sound." They explain this by showing that by means of a large surplus of rice they are able to buy these important articles. But in spite of all they told me, it remains somewhat indistinct just how accumulation takes place. Evidently the two leading principles referred to previously on p. 295, that he who produces an article owns it, and he

who uses it has the right of usage, play a prominent role. It is conceivable that the division of accumulation capital into masculine and feminine categories took place long ago, and that at that time men had charge of the things they themselves produced and used, and accumulated these things in the form of buffaloes, while women took charge of vegetable production and invested the results thereof in objects that could be bought for these products, or such things as were feminine like jewels and cloth. However this is only an hypothesis, and it is possible that we might reach an answer to this question by studying the rights of inheritance of the Lamet and their property rights on the field of research. These objects in which their entire capital is invested have other functions, as has already been pointed out, namely to attain prestige, and to serve as sacrifices for the important ancestor spirits. I shall go deeper into this in the following chapter.

Thus what we have observed here is the great role played by rice in the life of the Lamet. The greatest part of their time and labor is spent on rice, and among all the peoples in this district, the Lamet more than any other tribe are specialists in the cultivation of rice for selling purposes. But the rice in itself is not the goal aimed at, for it is only a means for obtaining other things which the Lamet value above everything. Because of new roads being opened in Laos, and cheap rice flowing into the country from the districts where there is a great surplus in Indochina and Siam, rice has already begun to lose its value as a means of exchange. In this way the entire culture of the Lamet stands before a completely new situation, critical in its character, and it is going to be extremely interesting to observe how this problem will be solved.¹⁾ Since rice is a means and not a goal, the old aims of the Lamet will probably remain, but the means must be exchanged for another. However, since this is of central importance in their entire method of living and in their culture, it will most certainly not take place without difficulties. There is nothing to prevent the cultivation of rice from survival, for the Lamet will always feel the need of rice, but the thing to be adjusted is the surplus production of this variety of grain, and something must be found to replace this.

¹⁾ This refers to the situation in 1938.

CHAPTER 15.

Cultural Drives

It is a wellknown thing that when analysing and describing a community, one can as a matter of fact take any one of the many aspects as a starting point. The more points of view there are, the better the picture of reality is likely to be. In sociology one often comes across a common mode of expression which says that "everything is interrelated." If we should set out from a principle like this, one aspect only ought to really suffice, for then we could include all the details in the social activity into a single starting point. If we set out from culture or from community life as an entirety, it is indeed very possible that everything depends upon everything else, that is to say, all parts and categories within community life, but it is not necessarily true that every part is immediately dependent on every other part in a culture, nor that one part of a culture must necessarily cohere with another. For example, sometimes religion and art are coupled into one category, sometimes they are independent of each other, sometimes the economic life can affect important and large sections of community life, but it happens quite as often that with economy as a starting point, one finds that everything does not cohere with it. Thus it is not always the case that such a thing as certain esthetic manifestations like music must necessarily cohere with economy, not even religion. As far as the Lamet are concerned, it is indeed difficult to see such a connection between their music and economy. Since it is not easy, however, to get a general view of the whole and to ascertain all the connections, it can be of certain interest to start from quite a different point, in order to obtain a view of the community life of the Lamet. Therefore I intend to make an attempt in this chapter by way of experiment at using the wellknown Thomas' four wishes¹⁾ as a point of departure in order to see where this can lead us.

Every category of culture has certain functions, that is to say, it is aimed at satisfying certain needs within the community. Because of the

¹⁾ Cit. R. E. Park and E. W. Burgess: Introduction to the science of sociology. Chicago 1930, pp. 488 seqq.

integration of various elements, these categories grow larger or smaller, according to how many different parts they encompass. In this connection the categories of culture can be classified according to size, as the Americans do, for example,¹⁾ in items, traits, trait complexes, etc. Each such a larger or smaller category forms a unit of its own which has its special functions.

Needs could be classified in the same way. We can speak of a need of protection against cold, and in this connection the community categories which supply the members of the community with wood, clothing, etc., are in function. We can also speak of protection against rain, wind, etc. and all the climatic factors. Many of the categories which are a response to the physical surroundings, can naturally in their turn be ascribed to certain desires. These desires are to a great extent of economical character, and are aimed partly at establishing security, or more correctly, a feeling of security. But there are other desires as well in social life, and Thomas has set up four desires or wishes, which he considers to be social atoms. Added to the desire for security, these are, the desire for new experience, the desire for recognition, and the desire for response. These desires are satisfied by means of different categories, and at the same time one category can satisfy many other desires. There is always something to be found which is of value in a community, which serves as a goal for these desires, certain values of positive or negative character. Thus, in spite of the fact that one category is directed towards several goals, I shall first make an attempt at using the desire of the Lamet for security as a point of departure.

In the preceding chapters we have seen how the Lamet satisfy their economic needs, protection against climatic factors in the form of houses, fire, clothes and food. We have also ascertained that there exists a certain "social insurance" or rather insurance for old age, in their community, in the fact that old people have their given place in the life of production and in the family. It is surely likewise with invalids. To be sure, I have only observed one case. This was a man in Mokala Panghay who had a knee injury that rendered him partially incapable of work. Meanwhile he occupied himself with handicraft, and looked after children, and in this way had the same function as an old person. It would be interesting to get hold of further material of this kind, in order to see how the Lamet manage such situations. Unfortunately my stay there was altogether too short to allow me to collect material of this kind for study.

¹⁾ Ralph Linton: *The study of man*. New York, London, 1936, chap. 22.

In most communities it is generally the case that technique does not seem to be sufficient for establishing a strong enough feeling of security. Altogether too many unknown factors make their appearance in reality, and too much seems to be ascribed to fate or chance. It is here, then, that irrational thinking creeps in, and religion and magic begin to play an important part in social life. Thus the Lamet's knowledge of medicine is based on magical treatments, which proceed from conceptions about the soul of man and the spirits in the surrounding supernatural world. I shall not describe the methods used by the medicine man of the Lamet in this book; I only wish to mention in this connection, that it is extremely seldom that any purely pharmaceutic knowledge is shown on the part of the Lamet, but instead, all the ability of the medicine man is based on seeking after lost souls and finding out which spirits have been the cause of sickness. When he has found the reason, which is done by divining by means of eggs — he reads in the blood streaks of germ plasma — he sets about healing the sick person by means of spells and sacrifice for the demons of sickness. The Lamet have evidently learned this art from the Yuan, and it is difficult to say to what degree they have something of their own that distinguishes their medicinal precepts from those of the Yuan.

Since the uncertainty of life is great, they attempt to predict possible events, and act accordingly, and this is done by means of manifestations, omens and dreams. Omens of this kind, *mrā*, play quite a role, and can have far-reaching results. Thus for example, it is considered to be a very bad omen, *mrā ku lok*, if a wild hen, a roe or some other wild game of the forest happen to come into the village. Everybody is afraid that he is going to die. And if a wild bird happens to enter one of the dwellings, somebody in the house is surely going to die. This happened in one of the northern villages, for a turtledove had happened to fly into a house, and shortly afterwards one of the members of the household had died. Once in Mokahang Tai roe and wild chickens had come into the village, which resulted in the whole village moving immediately out of pure fright. Some time afterwards the village burned down. This story was told to me with real credibility by the village inhabitants of Mokahang Tai. When the Lamet set out for hunting, they are very careful to avoid the regular roads, for if they should meet a pregnant woman it would be a bad omen.

What holds good in connection with omens, is also true of dreams, and the latter play quite a part in the life of the Lamet, but it is not

possible for me to go into this subject here. In certain cases dreams can be caused by evil spirits, and then a person becomes so ill that not even the medicine men have the power to heal him.

In the preceding pages we have seen how the Lamet attempt to secure themselves in their life of production by means of various and magical actions. I shall try to make a little summing up in this matter, without making a general exposé of the whole religion of the Lamet. I have already published in another connection some of the religious conceptions of the Lamet,¹⁾ but here I shall make certain modifications and look at the material from a particular point of view, namely that of religion and magic as a sort of investment for security or certainty in the life of production, or in other words, see which magical and religious means are used for complementing the practical activity and experience of the Lamet, in order to attain the values which are the goals for their desires. This is of course only one of the functions of primitive religion, but it is also most certainly a very important function.

Supernatural beings and other religious entities and categories undoubtedly play an important part in the life of the Lamet. A Lamet cannot undertake the least thing without taking into consideration his conceptions of the supernatural world. However, there are people who are more religious, and those who are less so, among the Lamet just as anywhere else. Many a time I have noticed that particularly among the younger generation there are those who disregard some of the rules that ought to be followed for the sake of the spirit world. Some of them even told me that they did not believe much in all this, but in spite of their rationalism, they still acted according to tradition and made the required sacrifices. Pressure from the older generation is also brought to bear in regard to religious matters, and young people have great respect for all their elders. Even though the younger element state that they do not believe in all the spirits, I could not get away from the impression that they are just a little afraid that perhaps something supernatural exists after all.

One of Tapia's sons in Mokala Panghay helped me to map a swidden. I needed some bamboo rods as stakes for triangulation, and the boy went and fetched these in the forest, and we placed them out in the swidden. His father, old Tapia, happened to see this and he became both troubled and angry, and he scolded his son for having done this. *phi côm*, the

¹⁾ Izikowitz, K. G.: Fastening the soul. Some religious traits among the Lamet (French Indochina). Göteborgs Högskolas Årsskrift, Göteborg, 1941.

dangerous spirit of the swidden, might see these bamboo twigs and come down to harm both harvest and people on the swidden. The son knew this very well, but told me that he did not believe in it at all. A few days later Tapía fell ill, and it was the general opinion that the spirit of the swidden had brought about the illness.

Another time the same boy accompanied me on a hunting trip, and we pursued a herd of boars. We happened to approach an apparently virgin forest, and at first the boy did not dare to enter it with me, since evil spirits had their haunts there. I reminded him that he did not believe in such things, and he then answered that it really was not so dangerous to go through the forest in pursuit of the wild hogs. He finally followed me through the forest, but he was evidently just a bit uncertain, and gradually decided that it was safest to sacrifice some chewing betel and a little tobacco to the dangerous spirits, which he obviously believed in, in spite of everything. He laid his sacrifice on a leaf on the ground, and mumbled a short spell, saying that he only intended to pass through the forest without disturbing anything or shooting. Later on the wild hogs went down into a glen on the other side of this forest, and not until we came there did we succeed in shooting a single animal. The boy declared afterwards that if we had not sacrificed to the spirits, the wild hogs would never have left the woods, and we would never have succeeded in getting any of them. This can be regarded as a typical example of their way of dealing. Even if the youth have an indifferent attitude towards the spirits in daily life, yet there will always be situations in which they "prefer the certain to the uncertain" so to speak, and make sacrifices to the spirits simply for fear of not attaining their goal.

In the previous chapters I have described a number of ceremonies of religious and magical character that are connected with the life of production. Before making a summary of this, I must first describe the most important cult of all existing among the Lamet, namely that of the ancestor or house spirits, since this plays such a central role in their entire social life. I shall describe this cult in spite of the fact that my material is exceedingly scanty.

The Ancestor Spirits

The ancestor spirits are called *mbrög n'ā*, sometimes also *prierr* or *phi* is used instead of *mbrög*. The word *n'ā* means dwelling, and the spirits are therefore simply called house spirits. The Lamet emphasize the fact, however, that these spirits are those of departed parents, and this becomes

obvious in prayers and formulas to the house spirits, or ancestor spirits as they can also be called. For this reason also, such expressions as *phi un'* and *phi nē* are sometimes used, which mean father spirit and mother spirit respectively.

These spirits are the most important of all, and the family is dependent upon them to a very large extent. As a matter of fact they are the central figures in the lives of the Lamet, who believe that if they look after these spirits properly, the whole family will have good health, many children will be born, the harvest will be successful, and all their wishes will be fulfilled. Whatever a Lamet is about to undertake he must inform the house spirits. If he should forget to do so, he is likely to meet with some mishap, and I shall relate an example of this in the following. It is of special importance to sacrifice to the ancestor spirits in all the changes that occur in life, when marriage takes place, at burials, in adoption, etc. For example, a new jug of rice wine cannot be opened without a sacrifice being made to the house spirits and their being informed on the matter. In this case the lid of earthenware that covers the jug is carried to the altar and placed at its base, and a little mash is laid on it.

It is the housefather that has charge of the sacrifices made to the ancestor spirits, and since these spirits are considered to be more important than all others, it might be said that the housefathers are in a way the most important "priests" in the community of the Lamet, even more important than the *xamiā*, who as a matter of fact has very little power of decision.¹⁾

The Lamet consider it of importance that the ancestor spirits live in the house. Elsewhere in this book I have described how the spirits are called to a newly built house (pp. 160–161). The house spirits are particularly fond of buffaloes, and for this reason the skull of the buffalo sacrificed to these spirits is hung at the altar of ancestors. Among the Lower Lamet moreover, the gable corners of the dwellings are decorated with wooden

¹⁾ This is of course very important from a social point of view. Since the ancestor spirits are considered to be more important than the village spirit — the dearest possessions of the Lamet and their economic surplus go to the ancestor spirits — this naturally contributes to a lessening of the power of the village priest, and at the same time a lessening of the coherence within the village, or of the latter as a social unit.

The question is whether the *xamiā* can possibly have developed from the housefather as "priest." If it is true that the village spirit is the ghost of his ancestors, he thus fulfills his duty to his ancestors by sacrificing to the village spirit. Thus it is easy to see why the *xamiā*'s office is hereditary. This is something to be investigated further.

pieces that are sculptured in the shape of buffalo horns. They believe that these please the house spirits. "When they see the horns they enter the house," my informers told me. I have asked about this very thing a number of times in different villages, and there is no doubt about my having the right slant on the matter. In the beginning, however, my views regarding this were somewhat different, because there are investigators who believe that these gable horns should have the effect of frightening evil spirits.

In anthropological literature it has also been stated that the cult of buffalo horns has originally had some connection with the moon cult. It is possible that this is so in regard to Africa, but I have not met with any information of this kind among the Lamet. They also have a kind of gable horn with tassels on the watch houses on the swiddens, which are intended for enticing the soul of rice to the watch house. Here we see that the idea is the same.

It is strange, however, that all of the houses of the Lower Lamet do not have the buffalo horn ornament, but only a few of them, and on various occasions I have tried to find out the reason for this. It is possible that only those houses whose owners are rich enough to be able to sacrifice buffalo to the ancestors have these ornaments. Therefore I strongly suspect that this is a sign of dignity, because the sacrifice of buffaloes gives a man prestige in the community. But I have never got any direct support in this supposition, because the Lamet are extremely nervous about telling who are the owners of buffaloes, or who are rich.

On the other hand, these gable ornaments are never seen among the Upper Lamet in the form of buffalo horns, but instead a sculptured gable horn of the type shown in fig. 55 is now and then to be seen. If this is a sign of dignity or something else, I am unable to say. The Lamet themselves declare that the ornament is there only because it is beautiful.¹⁾

At the entrance of the dwellings there are small sacrifice bowls as well, and these are made of plaited work (*yōin*) and are intended for the house spirits.

The animal most often sacrificed to the house spirits is the buffalo, the most expensive of all the domestic animals of the Lamet. On the other hand, the village spirits must be contented with a pig, a dog or chickens,

¹⁾ In this connection I can remark that the so-called Black Thai, who are surely a mixture of invading Thai peoples and the original inhabitants, that is to say, close kin of the Lamet, also have a kind of ornament on their gable corners. Among these people, however, it is purely a symbol of rank, which only higher officials and nobility are allowed to use in their feudally organized society.

and "simpler spirits" only with chickens or dogs. This is proof enough of how the house spirits are estimated. On p. 200 I have pointed out an interesting linguistic difference indicating of class as well, which is used in regard to buffalo alone among animals. The classifier *kun* = elderly person, is used for a buffalo. Now when buffaloes are used for sacrifice, and this only in connection with persons who have died, or with the ancestor spirits, I have begun to suspect that there ought to exist some kind of mystic connection between buffaloes or persons and the ancestor spirits. It is quite possible that such a thing exists, but in spite of repeated effort I have not come across anything to prove this. The Lamet are exceedingly secretive in regard to their burial customs and everything in connection with the ancestor spirits. If I had been successful in getting hold of the prayer formulas that are repeated at the sacrifice of buffaloes, I might have come upon some indication of a possible connection here. It is not at all certain that such a thing exists. The sacrifice of buffaloes can have another principle. As a point of departure in a renewed attitude of this question, I should like to assume that buffaloes are possibly the most suitable animal for strengthening the ancestor spirits in their activity.¹⁾ Buffaloes are in fact the largest and strongest of all the domestic animals of the Lamet, and in their wild state they are among the most dangerous and bravest of all animals. Because of their size and their fine meat, they have surely been the object of hunting formerly (see chap. 9).

The Lamet are extremely afraid of disturbing the good will of the house spirits in the slightest degree, which is of course easy to understand, since so much depends upon them. For this reason the behavior of the individuals in a dwelling is checked by a number of rules of taboo. Thus I could not sit inside the dwelling and make notes, nor take measurements of the house, for they feared that the spirits would not like this. It was looked upon as a dangerous activity, or perhaps too, it was considered to be masculine work, and such may not take place within the dwellings. Therefore all masculine handiwork, whatever it may be, must take place outside of the dwellings, either in the private *coy* or in the *coy yix* or in the village square. Nor can any food that is seasoned with red pepper be prepared

¹⁾ R. Karsten: The origins of religion, London, 1935, p. 261, stresses among other things the strengthening of spirits or gods by means of the character of the object of sacrifice as well as its qualities. In the following I shall return to this theory. — "But the sacrifice may above all be magical in the sense that it transfers to the god the power which is hidden in the sacrificial victim, especially in those parts such as the blood, the heart, and so forth."

within the dwellings. Why just this is forbidden, I have not been able to find out. It is an herb that has been introduced relatively late, and if it is roasted over the coals, as the Lamet sometimes do, the smoke from it has an unpleasant effect on the eyes. It is possible that the Lamet consider the herb to be so strong that the house spirits could dislike it. But I never observed the use of red pepper in driving away spirits.

There are other rules as well in regard to the ancestor spirits, as for example that of strangers not being allowed to sleep in the dwellings, and that of bachelors not being allowed to sleep "on the other side of the hearths" (see p. 61).

The Lamet think that those who can afford to do so should sacrifice to the house spirits once a year, and preferably a buffalo. However, this sacrifice can be performed only in case the housefather has been ill. If he has not been ill during the preceding year, he can keep his buffalo. A man who has not made the sacrifice of a buffalo to the house spirits during the dry season is not allowed to do so while the rice is growing, even if he should become ill. Instead, he performs a little ceremony for the house spirits in the watch house on the swidden, just before the harvest begins. If a man is not wealthy enough to surrender a buffalo, a zebu-cow can serve for the sacrifice. However, this is the case only in regard to the Upper Lamet. If he is so poor that he does not even own the latter, he must be satisfied with the sacrifice of a pig. However a man of this description has no standing among the Lamet, and therefore he cannot expect to get any amount of help from his house spirits either. If a poor man has an accident and the medicine man shows him after the process of divining that he has sinned against the ancestor spirits, who are thus the cause of his illness, he must in any case make the sacrifice of a buffalo. In this case the poor man is forced to get hold of a buffalo, and his nearest kin on the masculine side, or some friends in his clan must come to his assistance. The man concerned is allowed to keep the skull, but the greater part of the buffalo meat which is not distributed in the village, is kept by the owner of the buffalo. If he gets well again, then he must repay the owner of the buffalo in the form of wage work or rice. I never met up with a case of this kind, so I am not in a position to give any further details on the subject. It is obvious that it would be extremely interesting to know how this judicial and economic proceeding takes place and affects those concerned.

The most important part of the buffalo sacrifice is the skull, and particularly the horns. The Lamet believe that the house spirits have their

living quarters in the skull itself. If this is provided with long horns, it is highly valued, and is something which makes its appearance in their prayers for a good harvest.

Unfortunately I have never attended the whole ceremony for the house spirits. The Lamet are not very willing about letting strangers take part in this. On the occasion of most of the more important feasts, the village is closed off so that no stranger can come in, and no one can leave. In Mokala Panghay one of the richer men, Tapia, had arranged for a feast for his ancestors, but he postponed it until after I had gone away. No one mentioned anything about this, although I asked a number of times if they were going to sacrifice a buffalo soon. As a matter of fact, I suspected that Tapia would soon be having a sacrifice feast, since he had not had one the previous year, and had moreover been quite ill during the harvest time. He sacrificed to other spirits instead. As soon as I left the village — these were my last days among the Lamet — I heard that Tapia was going to sacrifice to his ancestors. It happened that I had some sons of his in my caravan, and they asked to be allowed to return home as soon as possible, and it was only then that I found out what was about to take place. Tapia had kept the thing so secret, that neither my servants nor I had heard a word about it. Naturally the whole village knew about it, for before such a feast can begin the women must prepare for it by setting about making wine and distilling a large amount of brandy. It was most certainly due to the great respect the people had for Tapia, that they had not mentioned the subject, for he had the rank, the honor and the dignity that belong to the *lem*.

Once, however, I happened by pure chance to get in on a feast of this kind. I entered a village without having first notified anyone of my arrival, which is generally the custom otherwise. The main part of the feast was already over, the buffalo was slaughtered, the meat distributed, and all the prayers already gone through. Only a couple of days remained before it would be all over.

The man who arranged the ancestor feast had happened to wound his knee with a heavy chopping knife two months or so previously. He had been doing work of some kind in the woods, and the knife had slipped. His knee swelled up, and he could not walk. The medicine man who examined the situation declared that the ancestor spirits were the cause of the accident. The sick man then remembered that he had neglected to inform his house spirits about going out in the woods to work. The knee socket was very much swollen, and he could not stretch out his leg, but had to

move about with the help of a couple of stout sticks, hopping on one leg. He had most certainly been ill with this two months or even more when I arrived at the village. The lower part of the leg was quite emaciated, and it was obvious that the muscles were beginning to wither. He had already performed a number of sacrifices for the house spirits without any result in the way of betterment, and now he was making yet another attempt. The sick man had become an invalid, and had to sit at home in the village and look after children and make baskets. He had a large family, however, and was a rich man, so he certainly was not suffering from any serious drawback economically. If the case had been that of a poor man, it would have been decidedly more interesting to study.

A feast for the ancestors usually lasts ten days, and the first of these should be a "good" or "lucky" day (see chap. 8). This day is selected by the medicine man according to the calendar of the Lamet. The buffalo is slaughtered on the first day. On this occasion it is tied to a sacrifice pole outside the house, and then killed by means of the stroke of an axe on the neck, and simultaneously a stab in the breast from a lance. After this its throat is cut open in order to get the blood to flow out. The latter is kept in cheap Chinese porcelain bowls. The buffalo to be sacrificed should be black, and should have long horns. The spirits do not like the white ones. The bell worn by the buffalo is then hung up on the sacrifice pole, and if a man belongs to the roe clan (*tā pōś*) he fastens a long bamboo stick to the pole also. In some villages I saw a stick like this (*tuor*) with a triangular piece of plaited work hanging from the top. This is called *mblāi*.

The buffalo is then cut up, and the head is cleaned and the brain and eyes removed. The skull is hung at the altar of the ancestors in the middle of one of the long walls. It is placed on a pole which is painted with stripes running horizontally. Buffalo blood is used as paint. This stick must be of a certain variety of wood which is called *čig riē*. *riē* is a fruit tree with edible fruit. The latter is rather sour, and I am not acquainted with the Latin name of the tree. In Laotic it is called *mak phot*. I have no information concerning why just this particular tree is used.

Grass is placed in all the openings in the skull, that is, the holes for the eyes, the nose and mouth. A lot of sacrificial blood is spattered onto the wall near the altar, and the axes, knives and the lance used in killing the buffalo and cutting it up, are placed on the floor near the altar.

All the members of the household are obliged to wear painted faces as long as the feast for the ancestor spirits lasts. For a man, this consists

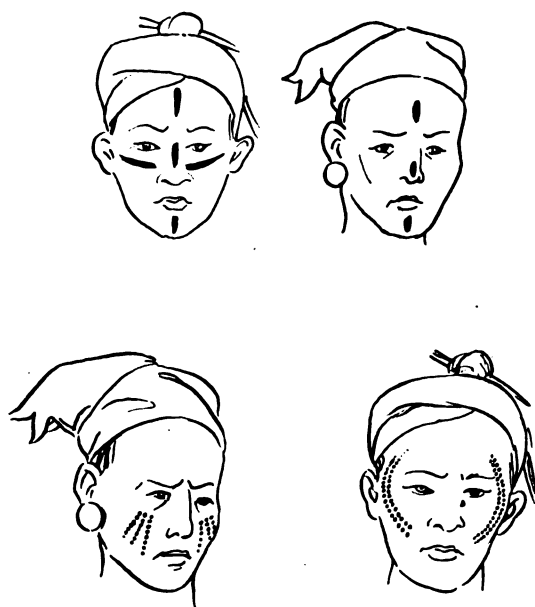


Fig. 128. Face paintings for the ancestor ceremony.
Above, paintings from Upper below, from Lower Lamet.

of a couple of charcoal lines going from the upper lip over the cheeks towards the forehead. These represent buffalo horns. The women have a few streaks under the eyes. The painting is different for the Upper Lamet, as can be seen from fig. 128. The painting is done with charcoal and is called *hal ptag*.

To the left of the door of the house a big wooden sword is fastened, and a few sacrifice baskets are hung, in which some of the buffalo meat is placed. A number of different dishes are prepared from this, soup more than anything else, and a dish of very finely chopped meat mixed with herbs, which is eaten raw. This is the festival food of the Lamet. It is placed in Chinese porcelain bowls which are laid on a shelf near the altar. The family members then dress up in their finest clothes, and the whole village is invited to come and eat and drink. All day and all night long visitors pay their calls, and they sit and talk and eat a little with the family. For weeks previous to the festival, the women have been busy arranging the alcoholic drinks, and great quantities are consumed on such occasions. For ten whole days and nights the drinking goes on. That part.

of the buffalo meat that is not consumed at the feast is distributed to the various houses in the village. What remains is kept by the owner of the buffalo, who dries it. It is evident that a feast of this kind is a tremendous expenditure for the Lamet. The buffalo represents an investment in itself, and added to this is all the other food included in the menu, such as chicken, pork and the like, which is sacrificed to the ancestor spirits at the same time. Great quantities of rice are of course consumed at this time as well, not only in the form of food, but transformed into wine and distilled drinks. Besides all these things, other wild and cultivated plants that are accessible at the time are included.

Bronze drums also come into play during the feasts for the ancestors, and are used for enticing the spirits of the ancestors to the house. It is important that these drums are whole and have a good sound. The Lamet originally bought bronze drums from the Niang peoples, who seem to have been the makers of them, according to my informants. These people live in *Muong Kiem*, four days by foot from Chiangmai in Siam. Niang is probably a Karen tribe. The shape of the drums is of the so-called type IV, which is considered to be the latest of the bronze drums.¹⁾ It is this type that is used by the Khmu and other tribes in Laos. The Lamet did not know anything about the meaning of the ornaments on the drums. A bronze drum is considered to be the height of luxury, and the most expensive thing any of them can acquire. It is considered to be equal in value to four buffaloes, and sometimes even more if it has a particularly fine sound. By way of further comparison I can say that a buffalo that was worth about 30 piasters in 1938, was considered to correspond to one year of service marriage, or more correctly, one buffalo equals the surplus or the savings it is possible to collect during a year of work.

When the bronze drums are not in use, they are buried in the ground in some secret place known only to the housefather. This can be far out in the forest. In the Lamet language bronze drums are called *kld*, and this word is evidently borrowed from the Karen language, since they have the same name in the language of this tribe.²⁾

Besides the bronze drums, gongs and cymbals are used at the feasts for the ancestors, and a number of Laotic *sampots*, a kind of loin cloth of silk, are to be seen.

The festival for the ancestors is at the same time a display of all that

¹⁾ Franz Heger: *Alte Metalltrommeln aus Südostasien*. Leipzig, 1902.

²⁾ H. I. Marshall: *The Karen people of Burma*. The Ohio State University Bulletin, vol. 26, no. 13, Columbus, 1922, p. 317.

the family owns in the way of articles of luxury and things saved. We know that an exhibition of the surplus production or the like occurs among other primitive peoples as well.

In the house of the sick man referred to here, where the feast of ancestors took place, there were no less than five bronze drums and several gongs hung up, one of the latter being the largest I have ever seen. It had a very beautiful verdigris green patina, and was certainly one meter in diameter. These musical instruments represented a great amount of wealth. The housefather informed me that all of these things were old heirlooms. He himself had been too poor and had had too much hard luck to be able to add to his wealth. Since the important sacrificial ceremonies were already over, I was allowed to enter the house, mostly because I was expected to have with me some European medicine that might help the injured leg.

On the beams above the altar of ancestors, a collection of *sampots* had been hung, these being of high quality silk, and made in beautiful *ikat* technique. My Laotic secretary declared that they were very old, and that the art of making them no longer existed in Laos. He supposed that even the Lao had imported them all the way from Cambodia. There were a lot of people in the house who sat and talked and drank liquor. Unfortunately I could not get anyone to recite the prayer formulas for me, since the sacrifices were already performed. Some women and children beat ceaselessly on the drums and the gongs. This music continued all day and all night, day after day without cessation. Two days after my arrival it was *sgi kat*, the Sabbath of the Lamet, and the last day of feasting. The drums were to be buried in all secrecy the following day somewhere in the forest. The silks, however, are kept in the barns.

When the ancestor feasts take place, the opportunity is taken for performing a number of other ceremonies as well, such as the adopting of children, the initiation of *lem*, and the celebration for having acquired a new drum.

A similar feast is held when parents are buried, and at this time, too, buffaloes are slaughtered. But on this occasion the latter are not tied at the sacrifice poles, but at the steps leading to the house, where they are slaughtered. Nor are they struck with axes at this time, but instead are killed only by the thrust of a lance and by cutting the throat.

It is obvious that since the house spirits are believed to be the ghosts of dead parents, the ritual of burial must have an intimate connection with the feasts for the ancestors. These two occasions are the only ones at which such great feasts are held and when buffaloes are sacrificed, and bronze drums and other parade objects are used and displayed.

In this chapter I have spoken of ancestor spirits and house spirits as if they were one and the same for reasons which I explained at the start. If we now consider them to be those of dead parents, the latter must then be ascribed to the forefathers. But if a man has separated from the main family and set up his own household, that is to say, he lives in his own house, he also sacrifices to the ancestor spirits in his home, in spite of the fact that his parents are alive. Thus when house spirits are spoken of in the same connection, it can be due to a confusion of house spirits and a special cult for the spirits of ancestors. In order to clear this up, rather wide comparative research is necessary. The cult of ancestor spirits exists among a large number of the different peoples of East Asia, and it is possible that it has spread like a kind of new religion from one place to vast parts of Asia. I shall not take up this problem here, but return to it in a special investigation.

We can state therefore, that the greatest feast, combined with the greatest economic expenditure, is directed towards the ancestor spirits. Since the Lamet consider these to be the most important of all, it is quite natural that articles of luxury and a large part of production are consumed at these feasts. In return it is expected that the ancestor spirits should give happiness and success in all the undertakings of the family. But this feasting has at the same time another function. A man who can afford to acquire all these expensive things which are connected with the cult of ancestors, and sacrifice so much at these rites, must be a particularly clever person, and thus his reputation and his prestige grow with every feast. In this connection social prestige plays an excessive part, and I should even like to assume that the feast of ancestors and all connected with it is the driving force in the entire economic and social life of the Lamet. It forces the more aspiring and ambitious to produce more than what is required for the necessities of life. Through the fact that the whole village partakes in these feasts and is supplied with food and drink, the family or house group gets into contact with the whole village, and apart from this it acquires respect in other villages as well.

Thus we see how the ancestor cult acts as a very important factor in the economic life of the house group, and besides, how it satisfies "the desire of security," that is to say, how it contributes to an increased feeling of security for the house group in all the vicissitudes of life. In other words, the economic sacrifices invested by the Lamet in the cult of ancestors are to be considered as something like a spiritual social insurance. And not this alone, for it also contributes to a satisfying of "the desire

of recognition," i. e., the family's struggle for social recognition as one of the desires that are worth striving for in the social life of the Lamet. If one wishes to investigate a community and try to find the action in it, it is often practical to try to find out what the desires and values are, and to see with what means and in which way the community works in order to reach these goals. These form one of the most important axes upon which the whole machinery of the society and its various wheels and parts rotate.

Rites and Economic Activities

A number of things are sacrificed to spirits at the rites that are connected with economic life, such as the heads or other parts of animal bodies, blood, cooked rice, wooden pieces symbolizing coin, tobacco, betel cuds and *mey*. In this connection it is interesting to notice a certain difference between sacrifice and rites in the various economic processes.

As far as I know, there are no particular rites of religious or magic character connected with the gathering of wild plants, and these plants that are used by the Lamet are accessible regularly at certain seasons. There is no lottery or uncertainty bound up with this part of the life of production. Nor have I come across any rites connected with fishing among the Lamet. It is quite possible that this exists, but fishing plays such an insignificant part in these regions, that it is possible that no rites connected with them have ever come into being. In this case, hunting is of decidedly greater importance, as well as being more uncertain. No matter how well the ways and habits of game are known, hunting is always bound up with a great amount of uncertainty. As we saw in the chapter on hunting, it is coupled with a chain of rites for the forest spirit. In this connection it is really the skulls of game that play the greatest role. The principle is that the spirit must be enticed into the skulls and live there.

To some extent, the sacrifice for the hunt is regarded as a kind of exchange according to the principle: "Here is a hen, now give me game instead," which one says to the forest spirit when sacrificing to it. Then when an animal has been caught, part of it must be given back to the forest spirit in the form of certain pieces of meat or certain parts, which are sacrificed on the spot where the trap is laid in the woods. This is done in order that one may continue to get game, and for the same reason the skull is kept, the Lamet say. But there are two interpretations that might be the explanation for this. The sacrifice of parts of the animal in the

woods is probably done with the view of returning more valuable parts of the animal, so that the power of production of the spirit will not be lessened. In other words, it can be regarded as a kind of spiritual conservation in hunting.

The keeping of the skulls of game has probably in view even the acquiring of power and control over one of the most important parts of the animal, in order to assure oneself further prey. Just because the forest spirit is supposed to live in the skulls, power can be acquired over it. However, all this is pure assumption, and in order to prove its probability, further field research is necessary, as well as comparative investigation of hunting rites, and the conceptions about various parts of animals and their usage, among the Lamet and other tribes of Further India.

The skull comes also into play in the sacrifice of buffaloes to the ancestor spirits, and here as well the Lamet believe that the ancestor spirits come and live in the skulls. Evidently the same conception lies back of this sacrifice and sacrifices for the hunt. Besides, the heads of nearly all kinds of domestic animals are used as sacrifices.

Since I suspected that the skull in some way might be regarded as a center of power, I cross-examined the Lamet on this point. However, I got no information on the matter, which might be due to the fact that I placed my questions from the wrong angle. Asking questions is often like adjusting a radio to short wave. One should almost know the answer beforehand, and get the "station" right away. If the question is a little askew, no answer is obtained. In my questioning I set out with the idea that animals possibly had something that resembled a soul. But the Lamet positively denied that such phenomenon could exist in regard to animals. In spite of this, however, I should not consider it improbable that the skull is a kind of center of power. In the preceding pages I have pointed out that one of the tribes neighboring the Lamet, the Puli-Akha, have a conception of this kind (p. 94). They believe that the head-soul of a man represents masculine potency, or the power of reproduction. The same kind of a conception is probably what lies back of the wild Wa's head-hunting. Human heads are used in sacrifices made to the spirits of the swiddens, in order to get a better harvest. I got this information from the Lu, who formerly lived in the Wa States. Besides, the Wa are a tribe that is closely related to the Lamet. Moreover, this conception seems to be the basis for the use of heads as trophies in many other parts of the world, not only in Southeast Asia, among the Dyaks and Naga peoples, but among the American Indians as well. Thus the head becomes the

site of a kind of life "energy," which the owner of the head can make use of. This energy is particularly concentrated in the hair, and this tallies with the conception of the Puli-Akha. The Lamet believe that the spirits come and live in the skulls. How to explain the relation between this supposed life "energy" and the spirits, is probably not so easy. In this case I should like to think it likely that the life "energy" is just a part of the spirit, according to the principle *pars pro toto*, that is, it is identical with the spirit itself, which in some way has the power of entering all kinds of skulls. This probably sounds a trifle strange, but the Lamet have just about the same conception of the character of the soul of rice and of souls in general. The soul of rice exists not only in the grains, but in the whole straw, and in fact in the whole field of rice, and it can be collected part for part. One can hardly speak of a rice soul for every straw, but rather of a common soul of rice for the whole district. It is likewise in regard to the souls of human beings. To be sure, they are concentrated in the head and knees, but these are only the centers of emanation, and each soul rules over its own half of the body, meeting in the region of the navel. The fact that spirits and souls can to some extent be regarded as personified beings, need not detract from the conception of their diffuse and somewhat "flowing or emanating" character. Thus, if one has the skull of an animal and performs the ceremonies required for getting a part of the forest spirit "to flow into" the skull, one obtains simultaneously power over the spirit in its entirety. If this explanation is correct, we return naturally to the question of the relation of ancestor spirits to buffaloes. Looking at it purely logically, the life "energy" in buffaloes should then be identical with the ancestor spirits. This is of course conceivable, but it is also only speculation, and unfortunately I am not in a position to give any information as to how the matter really stands in the Lamet's world of conception. It is not unlikely that the sacrificing of heads was an old tradition, to which the sacrificing to ancestor spirits was later adapted.

Thus we see that the same kinds of rites are performed, and the same kinds of sacrifices are made, within two important spheres of the production life of the Lamet, namely hunting, and the use of cattle. In both cases the skull plays the main role, and it is probable that conceptions of similar character lie back of it all. In these cases it is men who perform the rites, and who are responsible for this production.

If we take a look at the rites connected with agriculture, we find in part quite another variety of ceremonies, which are centered only

around rice. No particular ceremony is performed for wild plants, and the case is the same in regard to cultivated plants, excepting rice, of course. A great many spirits are sacrificed to while cultivation goes on, but it is all concentrated to begging these spirits not to prevent the rice from growing and bearing fruit. They do not bother about the other plants, which are not mentioned in prayers either. Sacrifice is made in the usual way to these various spirits, either with the heads of animals, or with food and drink of various descriptions. However, the most important thing in connection with agriculture is to protect, preserve and gather up the soul of rice, i. e., the growing "power" of the rice. Just here an entirely unique conception makes its appearance, one not to be found in the other production processes. All the ceremonies in connection with the soul of rice are aimed at binding it and keeping it within the barns. Now, since this ceremony is connected with rice and no other plant, we must assume that a cult of this description has been introduced together with rice, i. e., the Lamet learned it at the same time that they learned how to cultivate rice.

It is not rice alone that is treated in this manner, but the soul of human beings and the village spirit as well. Human souls and the soul of rice bear the same name, which, however, does not necessarily mean that both of these have originally been regarded as the same thing. In an article on the religion of the Lamet¹⁾ I have tried to show that it is possible that rice and the accompanying conception of the soul of rice are something of recent introduction, and that the Lamet have then probably given this peculiar growing "power" of the rice the same name that they had for the souls of humans. They have identified, so to speak, a new conception of life "energy" in plants with that they already had in regard to people. This could explain why rice and no other plant is considered to have a soul in the mind of the Lamet. On the other hand, it is quite another thing that certain trees, stumps, branches, etc. are able to have spirits, which according to the understanding of the Lamet belong to other categories of supernatural beings, however.

There is another difference as well between the rites for agriculture and other production. It is not men alone that take part in the agricultural ceremonies, but women as well, and as we have seen in the chapter on agriculture, the latter even perform "the ceremonial inaugural sowing." This must be seen together with what has previously been pointed out,

¹⁾ Izikowitz, *op. cit.*

namely that agriculture is carried on by both men and women, and that women to a large extent take charge of the distribution of rice.

Thus we see that the Lamet use means of magic and religious character in trying to assure themselves of good results for their production. This occurs partly by means of sacrifice and prayers and magical paraphernalia of various kinds. These activities are mostly aimed at driving away the dangerous spirits which might injure production, and at supporting those who can in any way further it. The latter takes place then in different ways and with various means, and with the little material on hand as a point of departure, the following can be assumed to be true. First of all we have gift-sacrifice to different kinds of spirits. This sort of sacrifice is made to the dangerous spirits only, in order to make them contented and go away. Other means for driving them away is also used, but I shall not discuss this here. Moreover, compensation-sacrifice comes into play, such as that made to the forest spirit.

Karsten's theory about sacrifices for reinforcement is of importance. This can explain a lot in the religious life of the Lamet. It is evident, therefore, that all blood sacrifices must be included in this category, for example, when the stones of the village spirit are smeared with the blood of the slaughtered pig, or when blood is spattered on the altar of ancestors, or blood and rice is stuck on to the head and the knees in sacrificing to the two souls of humans, or on to a bronze drum in order to give it a better sound, or on the crossbow in order to have better luck in hunting, etc. The term *poħ* = "to renew" could be explained in the light of this theory. This term is used in sacrificing to the village spirit, when health and prosperity, a plentiful supply of water in the springs, and a good harvest are prayed for. The first ceremony for the village spirits is performed right at the beginning of the rainy season, when the entire life of production is quiet, and when the supply of food is low, and also when the water in the springs has nearly run dry. When the rains come everything naturally comes to life again. All nature starts anew, the little mountain streams are once more filled with water and fish, and edible plants shoot forth in the forests, and once more the time for cultivation has arrived. The whole village is renewed, and in a way the life of the people gets a fresh start. I tried in every way to get a more detailed explanation of this term from the Lamet, but I must confess that in spite of repeated discussions with them I did not have any real success. In any case it is evident that all the ceremonies for the village spirit have some connection with this process of renewal in nature, and with the change in the weather, and the

ceremony itself is aimed at putting this renewal into action, or reinforcing it.

The village spirits represent first of all the interest of the whole village, and are therefore bound up with many branches of the life of the village people. The ancestor spirits have a similar function, but are particularly directed to the welfare of the family, and to its prestige most of all. For this reason I should like to assume that the ceremonies in both these cases are particularly aimed at renewing and reinforcing the power of the village and the ancestor spirits, so that these forces can help human beings to the greatest possible extent in their efforts. The more one can strengthen these forces and get them to be kindly disposed, the greater their contribution to man will be in his effort for greater security and prestige.

The two other ways of becoming assured of a good result in production are to obtain power over the spirits by means of the skull of the animal sacrificed at the rites, and to retain life "energy" by binding the soul of rice or the village spirit. To some extent both of these methods are aimed at similar goals, and it is only the methods that differ.

However, the different methods are combined in religious and magical activities, and this probably coheres with different conceptions of the supernatural beings and their character. The various conceptions and the actions bound up with them must be assumed to have entered into the life of the Lamet at different periods of history, either internally, through situations that the Lamet culture has met up with, or as a thing borrowed from foreign religions. It is probably most correct to assume that here it is a case of "both" instead of "either, or."

Thus I should consider it probable that certain conceptions and rites belong to the time when the Lamet occupied themselves with hunting and gathering, and that the actual hunting rites are a survival from that time. We could then continue to assume that gradually the raising of cattle was introduced, and that the same rites as were used in hunting were then applied to domestic cattle, that is, the sacrifice of heads. However, there must have appeared other conceptions as well just here, such as the strengthening effect of the sacrifice, for example. But the interpretation of the spirit entities has probably been the same. It is practically impossible just now to place the conception of the human soul in any chronological connection, but it is evident that when the cultivation of rice was introduced, the idea of growing "power" was adapted to the conception already existing in regard to the soul. This is of course a rather peculiar departure, for the

rites connected with rice are widely different from those connected with other processes of production.

It is possible that we could even make a classification of the various supernatural beings of the Lamet, by investigating them institutionally, so to speak, in connection with different forms of sacrifice and their functions. In this way we could surely see the matter in its entirety to better advantage, and we might even be able to discern the various categories of conception, which most likely belong to different epochs in the history of the Lamet.

The Lamet believe in a large number of different supernatural beings, some of which are nature spirits of various sorts (*mbrög*, sometimes pronounced *mrög*) and some the spirits of people who have died, *prierr*, even the spirit of death, and others *ši*, which can be translated best with "ghost." Sometimes the word *mbrög* is used for both nature spirits and *prierr*, and very often this term is replaced by the word *phi*, which is the Laotic word for spirits. There are a number of other beings besides, which have names, to be sure, but no indication of category. By way of example I can name *hār*, *tog* and *lör*, all of which are connected with the cultivation of swiddens. There is no common name for all these various beings, and the Lamet strongly deny that *hār* has anything at all in common with a *mbrög* or another category of spirit. For this reason I have wondered a good deal whether a being like *hār* really can be regarded as a spirit. During my research I tried in every way possible to find out the character of this entity, and I did not come across anything that prevented it from being treated as a spirit. What the exact difference is between *mbrög* and *hār*, I have not been able to figure out, even though I know the qualities of the different spirits. I have finally reached the conclusion that I got caught in the Lamet's own tangled web of thought, purely and simply. It is of course a very common thing for primitive people to be lacking general conceptions in some cases, and it is therefore quite natural that they do not have a general term for all the various kinds of spirit entities. Our term spirit can very well be used here as a general conception for all kinds of supernatural beings, which are more or less personified. Then even if there are several categories of spirits, they must all be regarded as spirits, since their common traits and their treatment is somewhat similar. The Lamet see only the differences between them, and disregard the similarities.

A conception of somewhat different character is the soul (*klpa*), which is only to be found in human beings and rice. As we have seen, the soul of

rice is treated to a certain degree as a spirit, and in some cases it is even called *mbrōg*. If we ask the Lamet for an explanation for this, we find out that when they speak of *mbrōg g̃*, they mean *klp̃a g̃* = the soul of rice. It is likewise with the human soul.

There are other categories as well, which are decidedly more difficult to understand, and which can hardly be characterized as any kind of spirit or soul. These are rather to be regarded as some sort of quality. *hrkiāk* is a conception of this kind, and can be interpreted as courageous or courage, wicked or wickedness, and even rich. Then we have the word *muīt*, which indicates a kind of strength of will in people. A man who has *muīt* can command others, and he can get plants to grow well. A third conception is *ken*, which can be best translated as life, even if this does not fully cover the meaning of this word. Energy might be a better word. If a person is tired, he has only a little *ken*. These three conceptions must really be regarded as qualities belonging to living beings. The first two are to be found only in human beings, but the last one can belong to plants and animals as well. However, these qualities cannot be transferred to other persons, and in spite of repeated efforts I have not succeeded in finding out what can possibly lie back of these conceptions. I have never heard of any ceremonies existing in connection with them.

These are only a few of the religious conceptions of the Lamet, and it is not my intention to try to make any detailed analysis in this connection, or any description of these conceptions. My purpose here is only to point out the role played by religious and magical rites in the satisfying of certain goals of desire. It is thus evident that these rites, in the connection in which they have been described, have the important object of contributing, together with institutions or activities of more practical, technical, character, to the desire for security first of all. By means of the various rites, the Lamet try to assure themselves of success in the struggle against sickness as well, and generally in the struggle for food and existence.

Nearly all the ceremonies of the Lamet are of magic-religious character. The purely social ones are of little importance, or not very ceremonious in character. Initiation ceremonies are lacking, and the matrimonial ones are practically the same as any other ceremony meant for establishing relations between people, like the formalities bound up with the receiving of guests, the forming of friendship ties, etc. All of these contacts take place mostly in connection with meals, and even if they are tied up with certain customs and habits in regard to behaviour, they are so simple that they progress without any great amount of formality. The existing



Fig. 129. Harvest.

formalities are really borrowed from the Thai peoples. This refers, for example, to the greeting of strangers with bowls filled with eggs, flowers and candles, and to the *tuktī* ceremony. On the other hand, it is quite apparent that a large number of conceptions lie back of all these things — even if they are borrowed. I shall not take up this matter here, but content myself with stating that these things have the function of satisfying the desire of response, and play an important role in the reciprocity and harmony that distinguish the social life of the Lamet, and which are necessary for all kinds of societies.

If the religious and magical actions are partly aimed at establishing security, one of them at least has moreover the important purpose of satisfying the Lamet's desire for social reputation. This refers to the cult of ancestors, as we can easily understand, for it is this that dominates the social life of the Lamet and is its stimulus. This striving for prestige plays a particularly important part in the economic life of the Lamet, and urges them to a surplus production. It also influences the family to stick together, and the power of the housefather or the parents over the other members of the family must also be seen from this angle. The striving for prestige is something of an agitating factor in the emotional life of the Lamet, and if some new means should make its appearance and be more effective for the satisfying of this desire, it is possible that it would

take effect with the Lamet. At the same time such a possibility is counteracted by the desire for security. One knows what one has, but not what might be. As long as the community satisfies the desire for security, and the desire for recognition can be reached, and both of these support each other, nothing new is created, and nothing new is imbibed from the outer world. In other words, the society becomes conservative, and no interest for new experience can be roused. However, the Lamet are not an isolated people. All around them there are other tribes with other cultures, and they cannot avoid coming in contact with new experience. Thus I shall make an attempt in the next chapter to describe how the desire for new experience in connection with the desire for recognition can act as a "wedge" in the community life of the Lamet.

CHAPTER 16.

Changes in the Social Life

The Lamet, like all other peoples, have a long history, during which their community and culture must have gone through a number of changes. However, their own historical tradition is extremely scanty, and so short, that no important conclusion can be derived therefrom, especially since they have no written records. Besides, the information we have about the Lamet from other sources is of very little value, and this includes even Pavie's journeys. Thus the only way in which we can trace any such changes is either by means of archaeology or comparative anthropological study. Meanwhile, all archaeological investigation in these regions is lacking. Possibly then, we might be able to construct with the help of comparative anthropology certain more or less probable connections with neighboring cultures. In this way we would only get at outside influence. Yet, we might take for granted, for example, that the Lamet have not always cultivated rice or had any agriculture to speak of, and that at one time they even had no stock raising. By studying economic activities in all their connections, as I have attempted to do in this book, we should then be able to draw forth different stages of culture based on economic institutions. Then, by eliminating these one by one, together with all the categories belonging to them, we should perhaps be able to reconstruct to some degree the main features in the history of the Lamet. However, the entire culture could not be got at in this way, and the same process would have to be repeated in connection with other non-economic institutions. I shall not go into this matter here, however, but instead make an investigation of this nature in connection with comparative study in another work.

In this chapter I shall limit myself to viewing the changes I was able to observe during my field research, that is, the current ones, and even those that have taken place during the last generation.

We can only see the external influences on a culture by means of historical reconstruction, and thus we are not at all able to find out what relation

these influences can have to social life and the processes that have taken place in connection with them. If one wishes to study the influence of other cultures, i. e., acculturation, this must also be studied in connection with internal conditions. For the sake of simplicity, however, I shall try to see the external and internal changes and the connection between these, and thereupon make use of the points of view which are the basis of the preceding chapter, i. e., try to see the reciprocal action between the various goals of desire and the changes in the culture of the Lamet.

Changes due to External Influence

The Lamet were under French administration, and were obliged to pay taxes to this government. Taxes were accepted for the most in natural form and very seldom in money. The Lamet were obliged to help with work on the roads for fourteen days of the year, and pay taxes in this way. However, this has had very little effect on their culture and community life. As a matter of fact the European culture has influenced that of the Lamet to a very small extent. The land came into the possession of the French in 1896, and since then there have only been a small number of French in the province. No missionaries have ever made their appearance. The only places where one can buy European wares are Houeissai and Muong Sing. No Lamet ever make their way to the latter place, but on the contrary go often to Houeissai, the seat of government. In the bazaars of Houeissai there are a great many European fancy wares, but the Lamet do not buy much of that sort of thing. The European products that are valued most are blankets, old worn-out felt hats, and above all tinder-boxes in the shape of cigarette lighters. Matches, on the contrary, do not sell at all. The case is the same in regard to European iron tools as well, which are altogether too expensive for the Lamet. They are not suitable either, for a Lamet could not use a European knife. They think that all knives are intended for chopping with and European knives are not particularly suited for this purpose. Our knives can be used for cutting or whittling, but the Lamet chop everything, and if they should in some cases cut things, they do so in quite a different way from what a European would do, who always directs a knife away from himself. A Lamet does just the opposite. He holds the knife still, and moves the object he is about to whittle or peel. For this reason their knives must be different in construction from the European ones. Besides, the difference in price is considerable. A good chopping knife, such as the Lao produce, cost

only 30 cents in 1937. A similar European knife would certainly cost at least ten times that price, if it was to be had in these regions.

Another article that is very much in demand is bottles for keeping brandy in. Also, a great many European garments have appeared on the market, such as bush shirts, etc., which the Lamet have bought in the Siamese cities.

There were strict supervision on the part of the French in all the districts of the administration, in regard to epidemic diseases like smallpox and buffalo pest. During the rainy season of 1937 a large number of buffaloes died of pest in Siam. The Mekong was filled with swollen buffalo carcasses, but the pest was prevented from crossing the French boundary by means of effective protective measures. Not a single buffalo on the French side of the boundary became infected.

Before the French came, smallpox was rife among the Lamet, and one often sees scarred and disfigured faces among old people. Nowadays all the Lamet are vaccinated against smallpox, and a native staff doctor is sent out by the government to make vaccination tours of the entire Lamet district. I was very curious in regard to the reaction of the Lamet towards this proceeding, and to my surprise, all realized the blessing that vaccination was. The older Lamet expressed themselves exceptionally positively, for they had experienced the terrible ravages of smallpox.

As I have already mentioned, there are a great number of different kinds of peoples and cultures to be found in the province where the Lamet live, and they are thus surrounded by many different tribes. The face-to-face contact between the various tribes is, however, not much to speak of. On the other hand this can be explained by means of the fact that this great confusion of peoples is to a certain extent comparatively recent, and it is therefore possible that the contact between tribes will gradually increase. The Lamet have in fact been influenced by two tribes, partly the Khmu, to whom they are closely related and with whom they have certainly lived together for a very long time, and partly the Thai peoples, especially the Yuan.

The Lamet have to some extent mixed with the Khmu, and perhaps they have also partially adopted certain of their manners and customs. I am not in a position to state exactly what they have adopted, since the Khmu culture is not studied as yet. In any case it is evident that the Upper Lamet have included a large number of Khmu words in their language.

For a long time the Lamet have had contact with the Yuan, to whom

they were at one time taxpayers. They have also borrowed a number of manners and customs from this source, which we noticed in certain religious and magical rites. However, I have no facts about this contact, since the Yuan settlement which once existed has now disappeared. Thus the Lamet have taken their calendar and their knowledge of medicine from the Yuan. Several medicine men told me that they learned about amulets and got hold of protecting spirits from prominent Yuan medicine men. It is quite characteristic that the entire ritual that is connected with the activity of medicine men is performed not in the Lamet language, but in Yuan. A medicine man is called *mət*, which is the Yuan word for such a person. Besides, the Lamet have adopted a great many conceptions of spirits from the Yuan, and in this way increased their own supernatural "population" to a great degree. The Lamet buy iron implements from the Yuan as well as from other Thai peoples, and even pottery and certain articles of luxury like jewelry and objects of silver, as well as silks for the cult of ancestors. They get their clothes from the Lu, who have come to the Lamet district very recently. Before the Lu arrived, the Lamet went almost naked.

Since the Lu live in the center of the Lamet district, they have had considerable social influence over the Lamet, and this is accentuated by the fact that when the French first occupied the territory, they placed the administration in the hands of the Lu, who were able to read and write. This had partially unfortunate consequences for the Lamet. For the slightest misdemeanor they were forced either to pay fines to the Lu in money or in goods, or to perform certain kinds of work. In fact, the Lu had the task of collecting taxes in the Lamet villages, and according to the Lamet, they took more than they had a right to. In order to earn still more money, the Lu took advantage of the vanity of the Lamet. A Lamet who wanted to become a nobleman was allowed to buy a title from the avaricious Lu chiefs, and since there were many among the Lamet who thought that a title of nobility could enhance their social reputation, they allowed themselves to be cheated in this way. Thus a man who owned several buffaloes and bronze drums could acquire a title of nobility for the sum of 5-10 piasters, and therewith acquire prestige. The Lu did all in their power to subordinate the Lamet and profit from their working power. Meanwhile the French discovered this, and a Laotic canton leader with French education was installed. This tendency to suppress and make use of the more primitive mountain peoples seems to be prevalent among most of the Thai peoples.

The Lamet have obtained bronze drums, which play such a large part in their lives, from the Karen tribes in northern Siam. I do not know when they began doing so. It is very possible that the Lamet have been affected by other peoples as well, such as the Burmese and the Mon. They have certainly learned the use of the turban from the Burmese, as well as the sword dance. It is also certain that influence from the Mon culture could be traced, since it has stretched its tentacles far out in Northeast Siam.

One of the most important changes in the life of the Lamet is that which has taken place through the emigration of their bachelors, when they seek work in the teak forests and in the plantations of northern Siam. I cannot state with certainty how long this has gone on, since I have been prevented from obtaining exact information and statistics on the matter. I shall try, however, to give an account of how this emigration has affected the Lamet, in my description of the internal changes.

Internal Changes

In order to see the internal changes, one must — in my opinion — have access to historical material and, moreover, obtain plenty of statistical information covering a definite period of time, in order to establish the changes in population, harvest and a number of other disturbances in the balance existing between the different social categories. Therefore it is rather difficult for me, after my very short stay among the Lamet, to be able to discern the current changes in the community of the Lamet.

One question which I am unfortunately not in a position to answer, is how it ever came about that the Lamet began to seek work in Siam. Even if there is opportunity for work there, it is not necessarily a fact that the Lamet are willing to go there. Other tribes in the neighborhood of the Lamet, like the Lu, Lantén, Mossü, etc. are quite unwilling to work for others. The answer to this question cannot be had until a new visit to the Lamet can be arranged. However, it is probable that the reason must be the striving for those objects of value that are connected with the cult of ancestors. In order to get hold of these objects the Lamet have undertaken journeys to northern Siam, and when they were unable to exchange their rice to advantage, they were obliged to get hold of cash in some way. The fact that the Lamet continue in the main to seek work in Siam must cohere with what I have just said, and also with the fact that most of all they want money for the bride price. But the articles

used in the cult of ancestors and in the paying of the bride price are exactly the same. Since none of these are manufactured by the Lamet themselves, they have been forced to seek them outside of their community. The motive power has thus first of all been a desire to get a rich wife, and also to be able to satisfy ambition by obtaining social prestige. But this in its turn has had and still has a certain effect on the social life of the Lamet. Through these wanderings, and through work in Siam, they have obtained new experience, which they have then tried to transplant in their home villages on their return.

The Lamet cannot have been in the service of the teak companies a longer time than these have existed. But this does not prevent the emigration itself from being decidedly older. This matter is most certainly bound up with the age of bronze drums and gongs in Further India. According to Karlgren, the most ancient bronze drums are traced to the fourth or the third century B. C.¹⁾ Meanwhile, I have never seen such ancient types of bronze drums among the Lamet, but it is possible that they exist. The bronze drums lie buried most of the time, and the occasions when one can see them in use are very few. Anyhow, the use of bronze gongs as capital investment is also very ancient, since this custom appears in large sections of Indonesia.²⁾

It is the bachelors of the Upper Lamet mostly that leave their homes and make their way to Siam, and one soon notices the great difference between the villages where this emigration has occurred and the others. The former often appear to be more neglected, and the people there are not so conservative as elsewhere. I noticed, for example, that in the villages where this emigration had taken place there was not the same respect for the priest of sacrifice and the village spirits as among the Lower Lamet. I can relate the following by way of example.

In several of the villages where emigration had taken place, I observed that the Laotic rice-husking apparatus was in use instead of the usual instrument of the Lamet, the mortar and pestle. The Laotic one consists of a lever, a beam about 3 meters long, which is hung up from the middle. At one end of it the pestle is placed, and at the other someone presses his foot in order to make the pestle go up. When the foot is released, the pestle falls through its own weight. This is of some importance in the saving of

¹⁾ B. Karlgren: The date of the early Dong-so'n culture, p. 28, in: *The Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities*, Bulletin 14. Stockholm, 1942.

²⁾ H. Simbriger: *Gong u. Gongspiele*. Int. Archiv f. Ethnographie, Band 36. Leyden, 1939.

labor. In most of the villages this apparatus was placed outside of the village district, usually near the barns. The reason for this was that the village spirits should not be disturbed. The priests of sacrifice insisted that if a machine of this kind stood inside the village, the village spirits would be displeased and things would go badly. In one village I saw that the Laotic rice pounder stood right near a dwelling, that is, in the middle of the village. When I asked about this the owner of the house told me that he did not care a farthing about the village priest or his spirits. If the Lao and the Siamese were able to have their apparatuses within the village, the Lamet could do likewise. By way of compromise, or perhaps as a means of safety, however, he had built a small fence around the house in order to show that this section of the village was cut off from the rest in some way, and that the village spirits had no authority there.

Besides the articles already mentioned as being obtained from Siam, such as fancy wares, no particular influence of other kind is noticeable from this direction. The effect of wandering away on the part of workers expresses itself in other ways.

Diminished working power in the villages should naturally have been the cause of changes in economic life. To distinguish a thing of this kind, when no historical facts are on hand, requires a comparison of agricultural acreage in the villages where wandering has occurred, i. e., that of the Upper Lamet, with that of the Lower. Unfortunately I was not able to undertake any measuring of acreage among the Upper Lamet, and therefore it is of course impossible for me to make any definite statements in the matter. A thing that can be quite generally observed is that the swidden groups in the northern villages seem to be larger than in the southern villages. This can be due to the fact that lessened working power brings about greater cooperation. The acreage of each family is bound to be less, and the surplus left over for exchange will be less. A surplus of rice depends to a great extent, naturally, on the size of the house group, and an overflow of this kind is very much less for each family of the Upper Lamet. This in its turn is bound to result in the fact that the latter are not able to acquire wealth to any great extent through the cultivation of rice. On the other hand this is not so necessary, since rice no longer is of importance as a means of exchange among the Upper Lamet. Money has made its way there instead, and by means of work in the teak forests and other places, they are able to earn the required amount for bride prices, buffaloes, and bronze drums. Coin has the excellent quality of resisting fire and

other destructive forces, while buffaloes can easily be destroyed by tigers or sickness, and the rice barns can easily catch fire. If a man needs buffaloes, he can very well buy them when he has money.

For this reason, very few of the Upper Lamet own buffaloes. Instead, these are often replaced with zebu cows, which seem to be easier to raise and less sensitive than buffaloes. Buffaloes seldom enter the villages, and run half-wild in the forests, where they can easily be attacked by tigers. Zebu cows, on the contrary, have the good habit of voluntarily coming home in the evening, and staying on the village square, where they are more protected.

Since the accumulation of wealth occurs during young manhood through the emigration of the workers, and since it is the bachelors themselves who accumulate their own wealth, it is quite natural that they obtain a fair amount of power within the community. They do not need to be dependent on their parents for the paying of the bride price, and are free from home ties in other respects, since they have left the working unit of the house group for a number of years. Thus on entering matrimony, they do not come under parental authority either. This authority, in fact, is considerable among the Lower Lamet, while it seems to be disappearing among the Upper Lamet. Thus, among the Upper Lamet a newly married couple founds its own household and builds its own house. It is possible that this is what is responsible for the dwellings of the Upper Lamet being much smaller and of another type than those of the Lower Lamet. In the statistical analysis of conditions in regard to population in chap. 3 (p. 44), I have pointed out that the number of house group members among the Upper Lamet, especially in the villages where emigration has occurred, is decidedly smaller than among the Lower Lamet. I have just stated that the house groups have diminished through the working power that is lost with the emigrants, and now when the families have a tendency to be split into biological families the co-operative unit must in this way become still smaller. If, therefore, the consanguine family group has been the ideal formerly for the Upper Lamet, as it still is for the Lower, this group has been split up now into conjugal families.

When a man has been in Siam for several years, and has earned enough money for the bride price, he usually comes home again. Only a few very ambitious ones remain long enough to save money for buying articles of luxury as well. When this man comes home to his village, he marries and founds his own household. While the children are small he cannot produce a surplus, and when his children have come to the age when they are fully

competent for work, the boys emigrate and the girls marry. The bachelors are practically forced to leave home in order to be able to earn the bride price which nowadays is almost exclusively paid in coin among the Upper Lamet. The parents have not had an opportunity for earning anything as long as they stayed at home in their villages. However, the bride price can be replaced with service marriage, and in this case a young man can remain at home.

I have undoubtedly got the impression that Siam has a romantic charm for the younger Lamet. Most of them have a great desire to leave home for a while in order to experience new things out in the world. The seeking of riches and the "fantastic possibilities" for this, are no doubt a strong incentive for the young men, also. Siam looms for them in about the same way as United States, "the land of possibilities," loomed for European emigrants. Lamet boys have often told me about the enormous sums some enterprising men have been able to earn in Siam, and it is quite a common thing to hear the story that so-and-so became so rich in Siam that he was able to buy a hundred bronze drums. I often heard this story told about a Lamet who had gone into business in Chiangmai, and who had had such good luck that he had an enormous fortune in bronze drums. He remained in Siam, however, and I regret deeply that I never made a trip to Chiangmai in order to meet this Lamet Croesus.

Among the Upper Lamet there are very strict rules in regard to marriage with the daughter of a *lem*. She is not allowed to marry anyone but the son of a *lem*. It is possible that this social distinction between the classes of a community, which is evidently greater there than among the Lower Lamet, has arisen just because of the emigration of workers. Since most of the young men succeed in scraping together just about the sum needed for the bride price, they are only in a position to marry a poor girl, for marriage is to a certain extent based on more or less equal exchange of bride price and dowry. As I have said previously, since the house groups have become altogether too small for producing any surplus, and in this way accumulating capital, there is thus practically no chance for poor families ever becoming rich. Those that happen to be rich have become so through inheritance. Therefore, wealth can only be exchanged, at marriage, between those families who have inherited wealth of some kind, i. e., the *lem* families. In this way these families form a distinct class of their own among the Upper Lamet, or we might say that at least there is a tendency in this direction.

Since the men leave the villages for a considerable length of time, it should have the effect of destroying a good deal of ancient tradition. When they do not practice their rites for a period of years, nor learn them in their youth, it is quite natural that a good many things of this kind disappear. This is probably the reason why we find decidedly less ancient tradition among the Upper Lamet than among the Lower. Thus conservatism among the Upper Lamet has been broken down to a great extent.

We can see, therefore, that the ancient rhythm that still exists among the Lower Lamet has been broken through the emigration of workers to Siam. The old co-operative unit with the extended family as an ideal has been split up, and this has a number of different consequences in its wake. Money as a means of exchange also plays an important part in this connection. A new phase makes its appearance in this way within the culture, which can have a widespread effect, and which would surely be of very great interest for further field research.

On the contrary, the Lower Lamet live according to old custom which has been in function, and functioned well, for a long time. They still feel secure in their ancient culture, and continue to use the cultivation of rice, and rice itself, as a means of exchange for reaching their desired goals. It is in fact rather strange that no emigration to Siam occurs in these villages, since the Lower Lamet as well as the Upper have great interest in accumulating wealth. I am not yet able to state the reason for this difference. In Mokala Panghay a few young men had at one time set out for Siam, but one of them met with an accident, and another never came home, and therefore the emigration from this village came to an end. It is possible that reasons of this kind can put obstacles in the way from the very beginning, but I strongly suspect that there are other much deeper differences between the Upper and the Lower Lamet. I have not been fortunate enough to analyse this difference.

However, the Lower Lamet also have been placed in a new situation. As I mentioned in chapter 14, rice is not any longer worth much as a commercial ware. It was quite evident that such changes as the fall of the piaster and the new trade routes over the Annamese mountains would bring about a crisis for the Lower Lamet. But how this is going to end, and what effect it is going to have on this part of the Lamet district, is more than I am able to say, since the crisis began just during the year that I spent among the Lamet.

Old and New Trends

We can sum up the changes in the community life and culture of the Lamet as a condition of tension between the old and the new. Conservatism coheres with a desire for security, and as long as a culture functions well enough for this desire to be satisfied, there is all the reason in the world to believe that life will continue its usual course. Only when a change of some kind takes place, such as sickness, climatic factors like crop failure, war or the like, does insecurity make its appearance, and the members of a society are forced to take the initiative in order that their lives shall find their proper balance.

On analysing the culture of the Lamet, I get the decided impression that as a whole it is quite well organized. Most of the various parts and institutions of the culture have certainly a long tradition of accumulated experience back of them, and where rational activity did not suffice, the Lamet have complemented the matter with all sorts of religious and magical rites, in order to first of all assure themselves of security against the incalculable factors of life. Yet there is one point where the organization of economic living is vulnerable, and that is that the difficult spring months of the year have not been arranged for satisfactorily. This is a problem which the Lamet themselves discuss, but they have not found any means for remedying the situation. As far as I have been able to observe, their traditional method of production has not been changed to any extent recently through the introduction of new methods. An exception is possibly the acceptance of a few new plants, such as maize. The cultivation of this plant plays however, as yet a very unimportant role.

There are certain reasons for assuming that in some way the difficult spring months have contributed to the emigration. The time when men are most needed in the villages is when clearing of the forest takes place, or when the harvest is ready. As soon as the cutting down of the forest is over, there is not much to be done in the village until the harvest begins. For this reason the Lamet are always willing to accept work outside the village during this middle period. Thus it is possible that this very difficulty at springtime was originally the reason why the Lamet began seeking work elsewhere. However, this is only a supposition, and it cannot be taken as fact without further research work.

In spite of the difficult spring months, the Lamet have evidently felt quite secure with their traditional apparatus for production, and perhaps this has contributed to their not bothering about the introduction of new

technique. However, this has not been the case in regard to their fighting illness. This probably explains why they have adopted the medicinal knowledge of the Yuan peoples, and even willingly accepted vaccination and French medicines.

The desire of response is satisfied within the various groups: in the family, the village and the neighborhood by means of feasts, and within friendship and matrimonial bonds according to tradition. Except for some Thai customs, hardly anything new has been introduced, as long as we discount the need of bottles for brandy.

That which has brought about the greatest change in the social life of the Lamet is the dominating desire of recognition. Because of this the Lamet were deceived into buying titles of nobility from the Lu in Tafá, and it is in order to satisfy this wish that the Lamet youth try to earn a fortune through work in Siam. And right here the most important changes have taken place. Instead of producing a surplus of rice, work in Siam is undertaken. However, the goals of desire remain, like a *cynosure*. No changes in values regarding these leading interests of obtaining prestige by means of bronze drums and other articles of luxury are noticeable. These interests are still the utter goal for saving. The owning of buffaloes is also connected with this, but has been replaced by money. The constant hunger for prestige has thus forced the Lamet to work more, and when their desires could not be satisfied in this traditional manner, new initiative has been undertaken, and in this way a desire for new experience has come to play an important part in the life of youth. It takes form in dreams of the land where they can become rich — Siam.

In the preceding pages we have seen what effects these changes have brought about, and still continue to bring about in the culture of the Lamet, and it is evident that they have a certain relation to the forms of organization that are to be found in the community of the Lamet. In order to be able to produce a surplus of rice which was the means for reaching the goal of desire, a large co-operative unit was necessary according to their traditional method of production. This was based on kinship ties, and was made up by the extended families. The latter were led and ruled by the housefather and his wife of first rank, to whom all the other members were subordinate. There is always a tendency in subordinate relations of this kind towards opposition and splitting on the part of superiors and their subordinates. Here there were moreover other smaller groups within the extended families, the biological families, each of which strived

to found its own household and rule itself. The age group with the least privileges in this community was that made up of those who were as yet childless. It was this group which, when fully capable of work and grown-up, really contributed to the production of a surplus. Then when this age group became independent and made private fortunes through individual work in Siam, the extended families became broken up into its "biological" parts.

There is also a tendency in the society of the Lamet to a certain differentiation between the poor and the rich. By means of the changes brought about by the emigration to Siam, this tendency has been strengthened, and a greater distinction between the classes of the society of the Lamet can now be discerned. Thus we see how the changes referred to are connected partly to given social-psychological factors, and partly to structural lines and contrasts in the organization forms that exist. It is not only a struggle between the old and the new, but a struggle between the aged and the young as well.

CHAPTER 17.

Time Aspects

On analysing the changes taking place in the culture of the Lamet, we have been able to observe that the dominating goals of desire have as yet not changed. It is rather only a part of the means of reaching these goals that has done so. The cult of the ancestors continues to play the same central role, and it still has the same functions. On the other hand, rice has not its former role, and is about to lose one of its functions, and this is also true of buffaloes to some extent. In both these cases money has made its appearance as a substitute, and work has become a means for getting money. It seems also as if buffaloes are beginning to lose their role as luxury articles and units of value through the influence of money. Buffaloes are no longer such a part of bride price nor do they bring the same prestige as formerly. And it also seems as if buffaloes are being substituted for by other animals of sacrifice at the feasts held for ancestors.¹⁾ It can be assumed that the ancestral feasts, and the striving after prestige connected with these institutions, are dominating factors among the Lamet, and something that can not easily be changed, but can stand a good deal of strain.

It is not only values manifested, for example, in rites, that may characterize a culture, but also the activities that are necessary for the livelihood of the members of the community, i. e., the entire apparatus of production. The latter is partially directed towards values such as those of the cult of ancestors, and partially — and mostly — aimed at providing material security in life. I have earlier spoken of the three different methods of production of the Lamet, and the cultural differences that distinguish them, so it might be of interest to give a general survey on this matter.

As already stated, we are concerned with economic activities, some of

¹⁾ In this case it would be interesting to make comparative studies of the use of the pig and of the buffalo as animals of sacrifice in Southeast Asia, to investigate similarities between pig and buffalo sacrifices in order to find out whether the pig has earlier had the same role in sacrifice and culture as the buffalo later on.

which are masculine and some feminine, and some not differentiated according to sex. A feminine activity of this kind is the gathering of wild plants. This is not connected with any religious rites nor any decided organization, nor with any formally arranged exchange. Besides, it is mainly limited to the rainy period. We are surely dealing with a very ancient economic institution in this case. The implements used are also of very ancient character, and we have the simple digging-stick as a purely incidental implement, and the spade, which is in reality nothing more than an iron-shod digging-stick. The woman's net bag is also without doubt an ancient element of culture. Similar ones appear in New Guinea and Australia.

A purely masculine method of production is hunting, and to this we can add the raising of buffaloes. Keeping of domestic pigs and chickens is connected more with the family as a whole, and they assume a different position. In hunting we can observe a developed masculine institution with special buildings, where masculine activity goes on, accompanied by well developed rites. The matter of ownership of animal foodstuffs is a rather striking example of equality. The conceptions regarding proprietary rights and the distribution of animal food, particularly game, appear to a wide extent among other primitive hunting peoples. This is also most certainly a very ancient form of economy. The traps that are in use are for the most part the same as those used in large sections of Further India and southern China, and even in Africa. Some of them are to be found far away in the South Sea Islands. Since it is not my intention to take up comparative study in this book, I shall only mention this fact in passing. I think we may assume here that we are dealing with a very old hunting culture which is common in a high degree to certain parts of Africa and southern Asia, with offshoots in Indonesia and the island world of the Pacific Ocean. Many of the traps which have this territorial distribution do not seem to be found north of the Asiatic mountain belt. And some sort of boundary must exist between the primitive cultures of Further India and the predecessors of the Chinese culture. This can be seen also in the manner of dressing.¹⁾

Cattle raising is decidedly more difficult to trace. But one thing is clear, and that is that the cattle raising of the Lamet seems to have been adapted to, and identified with, the rites connected with hunting. Here,

¹⁾ S. Lagercrantz, *Beiträge zur Kulturgeschichte der Afrikanischen Jagdfallen*, in: *The Ethnographical Museum of Sweden, Stockholm, New Series, Publication No. 5*, 1938, points out the connection between Africa and Further India (p. 160).

however, we have a point of great importance, and that is the fact that the buffalo is connected with a tendency to class distinction among the Lamet. It has become a kind of measure of capital, and an article of luxury as well. However, in order to develop this theory, close comparison with other cattle raising peoples must be made.

Finally we have agriculture, and here we can observe that first of all there are a number of varieties of cultivated plants that, though they contribute in no small degree to the food, are not of any real importance socially, as far as organization and cults are concerned. All forms of cult and all organization are dominated by the cultivation of rice. This is connected with the question of the chronological relation of rice to other cultivated plants. It is probable that root crops are older than grain crops. The latter are more cultivated among the Lamet, which is not the case among some of the Naga tribes.¹⁾ The chronology of the various grain crops has not been investigated as yet, either. Rice is the only cultivated plant that is tied up with many different rites, and with very well-organized work. In this case the men and women co-operate, and women perform some of the rites. They also take charge of the supply of rice to some extent, in its refining and its distribution for consumption. With the culture of rice, other conceptions in regard to property and religion make their appearance. Rice is not distributed within the village, as is the case for example with the products of hunting and cattle raising, but it serves rather as money in the matter of exchange with other tribes. All agriculture plays an important role in the society as a whole, but it is only a means of satisfying the dominating desires for prestige and for security. Both rice and buffaloes are means for accumulating wealth, although buffaloes are an end in themselves, which is not the case with rice.

The cultivation of rice decides the rhythm of the work of the year, and through its functions and in influencing all working life, the cultivation of rice affects the entire culture.

It is possible that these various categories of production have come into being at different periods of time, and one can assume that they form some of the links in the "chain of development" through which the Lamet have passed in the course of centuries.

¹⁾ H. E. Kauffmann, *Landwirtschaft bei den Bergvölkern von Assam und Nord-Burma*, in: *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, Jahrg. 66, 1934, p. 21. Taro is the plant that the Konyak-Naga cultivate most, and it is cultivated to a wide extent by the Thado-Kuki and Khassi as well.

The different methods of production to be found in the culture of the Lamet, appear among other peoples in Southeast Asia as well, and it would be of interest to observe the relation of the culture of the Lamet to the neighboring cultures. Thus, it is not merely a matter of investigating the different categories of the culture, and comparing them, but the special combination of the various elements which characterize the culture of the Lamet must also be considered, and the question of balance in this combination studied. It is very probable that we would find similar cultures in the neighborhood of the Lamet, but that the various components of these cultures play quite another role there than among the Lamet, and that other values exist. Totality studies of this kind in regard to conditions of balance must be undertaken in comparative study also. Not until then will it be possible to follow the various directions that the cultures have taken, and in what way they have become differentiated, for in this connection the matter of balance, i. e., the dominance given different categories of culture, surely plays an immense role. A culture is partly a combination of various parts that interact, and the role of the various parts and their relation to each other are probably dependent on dominating desires and interests and the means used for satisfying them, all within the frame of natural and social background.

Social life, like all other life, can be looked upon as a process; it lives and functions. A process is determined in the matter of time, and is thus determined by a certain point of time and a distribution of rhythm within it. The time can be a day, a season, a year, a lifetime, etc. One generally describes a community as a number of relations, i. e., interaction between the different components of a culture. But these give and take, produce and consume; all activity is directed somewhere, a certain end, certain values and interests, which are more or less common to all individuals in a community. When the goal is reached, it is only to be enjoyed, "consumed," i. e., made to satisfy the desires of the individuals concerned. Things like rice, buffaloes, bronze drums and other articles of display, are means for the satisfying of needs.

Among the Lamet the dominating goals of desire are intended to satisfy the needs of the family. We could of course take the individual as a point of departure and observe his life in the community, but since each individual belongs to a family, and since it is this group that plays the most important part, I wish to make a brief summary of the life of the family among the Lamet.

The family, whether it is biological or extended, makes up the essential

organized active unit in the community of the Lamet, and it is through this group that so many of the different categories of the culture function. It is patrilineal and for the most part patrilocal. The housefather and his first wife are the the leaders of the family, the housefather more especially. The other members are subordinate to both of these. In its economic activity the family forms a co-operating unit out on the swiddens, in order to produce different kinds of cultivated plants, and these are looked after by the family. Further contributions are made in the form of hunting and slaughter, and to some extent fishing. Through hunting and slaughtering, the family comes into contact with the men of the village in the exchange of work and products, but not so much with other women. By means of cultivation, the family makes up a part of the swidden group, and exchanges work with it as well. By means of building, it comes into contact with the whole village, and this contact appears in other cases also. Here as well there is an exchange of work. Through commerce in rice, the family develops an exchange of products with other tribes. By means of exchange through marriage, the family comes into contact with other families and clans, not only in the village, but in the neighborhood as well. This exchange is combined partly with service and partly with the exchange of articles of luxury. By means of the breeding of buffaloes and the cultivation of rice, the family attains prestige and social standing, and by investing the rice in articles of luxury, and by slaughtering the buffaloes and inviting the entire village to the ensuing feasts, they satisfy the desires of both response and prestige, and the course of the processes ends here simultaneously with the reinforcement of the ancestor spirits for renewed effort in the cycle of production.

A process appears also, if one studies the life of an individual from birth to death, but since he is a part of the family, it is better to study the question from the point of view of the latter. Thus in previous analyses we have seen how a family comes into being, how children take their place in the group, and how their training for the processes of work takes place, how the children gradually make contacts outside the family, this in regard to boys who are placed in the community house where they learn how a man contributes to family life, and how their work is otherwise fitted into the entire activity of the family. Further, we have understood the slow saving on the part of the family, how in its maximum strength when it comprises the extended family made up of several biological families, it can first begin to produce a sur-

plus and approach its goal. Thus there is one situation in the course of living, which consists of a slow process of saving, in order to reach the social media which are necessary in order to be able to satisfy their goal of desire.

The whole of life is a succession of rhythms which correspond to constantly recurring situations of the same type. These are observed in a traditional manner and the responses to these events have been worked out during long periods of time and are the experiences of generations. Thanks to the rhythmic order one can approximately foresee what is going to happen and arrange one's life and work accordingly. One eats different meals at different times during the day, one behaves differently as an unmarried and as a married person, as a young and as an old person, one lives in the village and out on the swidden, etc. And the different rhythms of life are all co-ordinated so that they fit in together, which result doubtlessly has taken much time. It is often so that certain activities dominate, and the others must be adjusted to them, and if new customs develop they are worked into the time scheme so far as it is possible, so long as they do not disrupt the whole, otherwise the case may be that they can not be assimilated in the social life.

We have first two kinds of factors which have great significance for the rhythms of life: physical and biological. The climate types with the changes of the seasons, day and night, years and months, come under the first heading, under the second we have the individual himself with his different stages of growth, the whole course of his life, during which he constantly changes status and role.

Connected with these natural factors are the social activities, but the factors can also belong to the cultural environment. The moving of the villages is an example of this. These movings are, as I have shown, certainly not dependent upon purely physical factors, since the villages seldom or never reach their possible maximum size. The rhythm here is also uneven and clearly dependent upon purely social factors, which are not always so easy to distinguish. Thus we have here the swidden group as the village's primary unit, which later, when the village has grown, divides itself up. And here appears another rhythm a division into the dry period and the rainy period or, more correctly, a time when one lives on the swiddens and takes care of the crops, and another time when one lives in the villages. The differences in the social life between these two phases are to a certain extent essential, but, however, not so significant as those Mauss describes in his interesting study of the seasonal variations

among the Eskimos.¹⁾ The life on the swiddens and in the villages is determined as to time by the seasons and the crops, but life itself is different in these two settings, the main difference being that on the swiddens one has no community house with all it involves of ceremonies, taboos, etc. Here one sees the functions and significance the community house has for the village as a whole.²⁾

But this rhythm is determined by the cultivation of crops, which is the dominating and most time-consuming activity in the life of the Lamet village. This is in its turn largely dependent upon the seasons, a fact which is almost self-evident in a monsoon climate, particularly in the case of a method of production like the Lamet's, which is dependent upon rain. In this climate it is not before one has begun to irrigate that one can to some extent master the variations of climate, but in such case one is dependent upon the water supply, which if it is not plentiful, can be influenced by the seasons.

Hunting and the very small amount of fishing which is done, and of course the gathering of wild plants, are also dependent upon the seasons, and also upon the cultivation activities, which must come first. Hunting follows cultivation in importance, and the other economic activities are complementary to these. One attends to them when one has time. There is thus also an evaluation with consideration for the time factor. But all this is again influenced by organization and division of labor. Everyone is not always working at cultivation at the same time, but some are free at times for other occupations. The organization of time and the rhythms of life are thus to some extent dependent upon the social organization.

The rhythmical course of the life of the individual and of the families and the other groups I have already described so much in detail that I need not repeat it here. But even these rhythms closely are connected with the cultivation of rice, which is a means for people not only to live but also to attain a better, more highly regarded status, to reach *lem*-ship. Here there are, however, a number of activities that are not dependent upon the cultivation of the crops, as, for instance, the boys growing into the common life of the community house.

¹⁾ M. Mauss: *Essai sur les variations saisonnières des sociétés Eskimos, étude de morphologie sociale*, in: *L'Année sociologique*, 9, 1906.

²⁾ The conflict between the interests of family and village is discussed in the author's study, "The community house of the Lamet" in: *Ethnos* 8, pp. 19—60, Stockholm, 1943.

The religious and magic activities as well as the esthetic ones are largely influenced by other activities. Rites and feasts among the Lamet are bound to special activities, for example, to rice cultivation and to hunting. It is only in societies of a more developed type that one finds a general religious activity which covers life as a whole.

Often these feasts are holy days which are determined by the calender, an element of culture which the Lamet have evidently borrowed from higher cultures. This helps them to keep to more exact dates. This was also true in Europe where the calender with its holy days gave the agricultural life a more definite division of time. All these rhythms are thus more or less interdependent and bound into a unit which perhaps sometimes may seem rather indefinite, but which, thanks to organization, has attained sufficient form to hold the whole thing together. It is like a musical score where each process corresponds to an instrument or a voice which harmonizes with, or is like counterpoint for, the others. One may then ask how these rhythms are bound together. This I have already answered in some measure through my study of the Lamet's life.

Now when an entirely new situation appears and it is of such a kind that the old patterns of response no longer suffice, then the society is forced to change. The time scheme may then be deranged and the rhythms changed as we have seen among the Upper Lamet in their contact with Siam and the introduction of money. Here the system of individuals or the families changing status, with *lem*-ship as their aim, ceases, and instead of class circulation there seems to be a fixed division between rich and poor.

A short stay in the field is only a cross section in time, it gives no depth in time, but through studying the small differences which exist in a limited society, which has been done in this book, one can even see the time factor and the rhythms of life, which should give a more correct picture than a static cross section.

One can also use this method in studying the differences between villages or different regions of a tribe and in that way bring out non-rhythmic changes which have appeared or which are in the process of taking place. Through applying this method still further one can within larger and larger sections discover the role which these differences play and perhaps both qualitatively and quantitatively show the influence of different factors. The ideal is of course if two societies differ in only one detail.

It was with the aim of studying these differences that I came to the

Lamet, though I could not carry out my program because my stay was so short. My further aim was during a later expedition to investigate the essential difference between the societies which use irrigation and those which do not. Unfortunately, the political situation in the world prevented these studies as well as those which I should have continued among the Lamet. This book is therefore to be looked upon merely as an introduction to researches which within a not too distant future will be impossible to continue in the field.

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ERRATA

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| p. 8, l. 18: | for "Coedés" read "Coedès" |
| p. 41, l. 5: | for "fig. 3" read "fig. 5" |
| p. 58, l. 16: | for "(tuôr)" read "(tuor)" |
| p. 61, l. 24: | for "Hong Het" read "Hok Het" |
| p. 92, l. 2: | for "ĕk" read "ēk" |
| p. 114, below fig. 39: | for "skirt" read "shirt" |
| p. 128, note: | for " <i>op. cit.</i> ," read "Siam, das Land der Tai," |
| p. 219, l. 13: | for "entrancee" read "entrance" |

Alliance and Classification among the Lamet

By Rodney Needham

The aims of this analysis are to establish the existence of asymmetric prescriptive alliance in a linguistic and ethnic area where it has not hitherto been recognised, and to display this system as the social expression of a form of symbolic classification. It is thus not concerned solely with the technical examination of a certain type of social system, but is essentially a structural analysis of an ideology¹.

I

The underlying theme is exchange, as exhibited principally in the obligatory transfer of women between certain categories of relatives in types of lineal descent system termed systems of prescriptive alliance. These systems are distinguished by the different modes of exchange which are entailed by their rules of marriage. There are only two basic types of alliance system: symmetric, in which there is a direct exchange between groups, and characterised by prescribed marriage with a bilateral cross-cousin; and asymmetric, in which women are transferred unilaterally between groups by prescribed

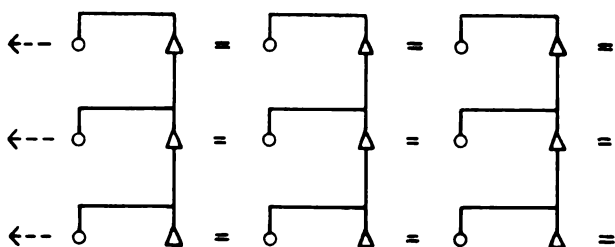


Fig. 1. Genealogical representation of asymmetric alliance

¹ It is also a contribution to a comparative study of systems of prescriptive alliance, intended to appear eventually as a monograph. It is meant, however, to stand by itself as an analysis, and thus inevitably overlaps a little at certain points with other papers on the same theme.

Anmerkung des Herausgebers: Die Verfasser der Aufsätze, der Buchbesprechungen und sonstigen Mitteilungen tragen allein die Verantwortung für die von ihnen vorgebrachten Auffassungen.

Note of the editor: The writers of the articles, the book reviews and informations are alone responsible for the opinions expressed.

marriage with the matrilineal cross-cousin. This paper is concerned with the latter type.

The formal features of an asymmetric system, thus defined, may be seen in a figure of genealogical form (Fig. 1). This represents three patrilineal descent lines, three being the minimum with which such a system can work. From the point of view of any line, the system is based on the distinction of three major classes of relatives: lineal kin, wife-givers, and wife-takers. Lineal kin must not be married, and neither must women from a wife-taking group, while marriage is prescribed with a woman of a wife-giving group. It can be seen that every male in the Figure marries a matrilineal cross-cousin, it being understood that this relative is a classificatory member of the category, and not exclusively the individual mother's brother's daughter. Marriage with the father's sister's daughter or any other patrilineal cross-cousin would be counter to the unilateral rule and is prohibited as "incest". It is not only women, however, who are transferred unilaterally in this way, but usually a large number of other prestations also. These are commonly divided into two classes: goods which are transmitted in the same direction as the women, and goods which are transmitted in the opposite direction. Though initially defined in terms of the unilateral transfer of women, the system is in fact constituted by the exchange of these two complementary classes of prestations. Finally, the most interesting and radically illuminating feature of societies founded on such a system is the concordance between the social order and the symbolic order, which are most profitably to be regarded as the expression in these two fields of a single scheme of classification (Needham 1958; 1959 a; 1959 b; 1960 b).

A considerable ethnographic literature on such societies has provided a great deal of material for theoretical investigation, but the sources were compiled with various ends in view and naturally enough do not always answer to the requirements of later theoretical analyses. One of these sources, which is of a singular value to which I return below, is Izikowitz's *Lamet* (1951). This monograph is based on eight months' research in Indo-China in 1937, and is concerned mainly to present a thorough account of the economic life. The author's intention was not to "treat the social life and culture of the Lamet in its entirety, but rather to try to view these things from the Lamet's activity as primitive agriculturalists". Moreover, the research was conducted at a time when Dutch works on asymmetric alliance were not generally known, and long before the appearance of the major work in the study of prescriptive alliance, Lévi-Strauss's *Les Structures élémentaires de la Parenté* (1949). Nevertheless, Izikowitz's monograph contains enough conventional ethnographic material on the descent system, marriage, prestations, etc. for a useful analysis to be made.

II

The Lamet are a mongoloid people of Laos, in Indo-China, living in mountainous territory in the upper Mekong basin, between the Nam Ngao and the Nam Tha rivers. At the time of investigation they numbered 5,795 and occupied a total of 103 villages². They speak a language belonging to the Palaung-Wa branch of Mon-Khmer. Izikowitz distinguishes two territorial and cultural divisions, which he terms Upper Lamet (to the northeast) and Lower Lamet (to the southwest): these differ in dialect, house-type, economy, marriage, and in various smaller particulars. The Lamet are surrounded by their close cultural relatives, the Khmu, and the Upper Lamet are considerably influenced by them. The dominant civilisation with which the Lamet are in contact is Thai, both in northern Thailand and in Laos itself. The economy is based on the shifting cultivation of dry rice.

The villages range in size from 38 houses with 148 inhabitants down to 2 houses with 10 inhabitants, the average village comprising rather over 14 houses with a population of about 56 individuals. Each has a communal men's house (*cong ying*). The average distance between villages is about 5 km., i. e. nearly two hours' walking in this steep country. There is no central political organisation; the villages are independent and possess traditionally no chiefs, though each has a patrilineally hereditary priest (*xemiā*). There is a class-division, more sharply marked among the Upper Lamet, into wealthy notables (*lem*) and commoners (*tō*).

The descent system is patrilineal. There are seven totemic clans called *tā*, a word which also means "ancestor" as well as referring to certain senior relatives. The names of the clans (with mnemonic designations to be used later) are: *Čaeit* (CA, CB), *Kiāk* (KI), *Klang* (KL), *Mpōl* (M), *Pōs* (P), and *Tavo* (T).

The name *Čaeit* denotes two quite distinct exogamous descent groups, which the ethnographer distinguishes as *Čaeit-A* and *Čaeit-B*: they are not sub-clans of the same descent group, and one of them (CB) is thought to be of Khmu origin. There are no phratries (pp. 85-6)³.

In every village there are always several clans represented, and it is in fact compulsory to have at least two, an obligation applying also to the farming-groups, which have to include members of at least two clans (p. 87). The largest village, Mokala Panghay, for example, contains members of five clans (pp. 119—125).

The clan is exogamous, and parallel cousin marriage is forbidden even when the parties are of different clans. Unions are arrived at

² Official figures of the former French government (Izikowitz 1951 : 38).

³ All such page-references, the author not being specified, refer to Izikowitz's monograph.

by individual courtship, premarital sexual intercourse being customary. Marriage is agreed upon between the two "families", and contracted by bridewealth and or bride-service. The amount of bridewealth varies according to the social class of the bride: it is very difficult for a commoner among the Lower Lamet to marry the daughter of a *lem*, and it is impossible to do so among the Upper Lamet. The length of bride-service among the Lower Lamet depends on how much bridewealth is paid; while among the Upper Lamet the period is fixed at three years. Bridewealth is paid by the father among the former, by the husband among the latter. Polygyny is possible but rare, and confined to the rich.

Widow-inheritance is practised, and even if a man does not wish to marry his deceased brother's widow he has to support her as a member of his household. If she wishes to marry some other man she must have her brother-in-law's consent, and the man who marries her must pay the bridewealth to him. "... A woman is regarded as the property of the household" (p. 99). The sororate is "often" come across. In case of divorce, girls accompany their mother, boys their father.

It is not only families which are concerned in marriage, but the clans: "When two clans are united by marriage, one says *tā-rūm* = clans united, or *tā-pesau* = clans in the relation of father-in-law and son-in-law" (p. 93).

The particularities of the regulation of marriage cannot be taken up until the relationship terminology has been examined, a task to which I now turn. The terms (pp. 90—93) are⁴:

1. <i>tā</i>	FF, MF, WF, SWF, WB, MB, HF, HFF, FZH
<i>tā-tau</i>	FFF
2. <i>yā</i>	FM, WM, SWM, HM, MBW, WFM, WBW
<i>yā-tau</i>	FFM
3. <i>uñ</i>	F, FB
<i>uñ-ñw̄m</i>	FyB
<i>uñ-kwn</i>	ZH(ws), MZH, HB, FB
<i>uñ-tau</i>	FFF
4. <i>nē</i>	M, MZ, FBW
<i>nē-kwn</i>	HeBW, MeZ, eBW(ms), FBW
<i>nē-tau</i>	FM
<i>nē-peit</i>	HyBW

⁴ In the genealogical specifications "Z" stands for "sister": thus "FZD" means "father's sister's daughter" (cf. the more cumbersome "FaSiDa"). The small letters "e" and "y" stand for "elder" and "younger", as in "eBW" (elder brother's wife) or "yZD" (younger sister's daughter): when they end a specification they qualify the whole of that specification, as in "MZDe", i. e. mother's sister's daughter older than Ego, an elder member of this category. The terms listed here are rearranged from Izikowitz's lists.

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5. <i>mā</i>	FZ, WeBW
6. <i>pē</i>	ZH(ms), HZH, FZH(ms), WeB
<i>pesau</i>	DH
7. <i>ēk</i>	eB, MZSe
8. <i>yū</i>	yB(ms), Z(ws), MZCy, FZS(ms), MBS(ms)
9. <i>al</i>	eZ(ws), MZDe, WBD
10. <i>haem</i>	MBD(ms), FZS(ws)
11. <i>ko</i>	FZD, MBS
12. <i>kapun</i>	W
13. <i>kmae</i>	H
14. <i>nīw̄m</i>	HB, WyZH, FyB(ms)
15. <i>kon</i>	C, BC, HBC
<i>kon-mae</i>	S
<i>kon-pw̄n</i>	D
<i>kon-s̄w̄</i>	ZC, SS
16. <i>kmōn</i>	WBS, ZS(ms, ws), BS
17. <i>kōit</i>	DH(ws), HZS, ZS(ms), WeBS
18. <i>voi</i>	SW, WBD, yZD(ms), BD(ws)
19. <i>tū</i>	HZD, ZD(ms).

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The grounds on which I shall try to clear them up are internal consistency, and comparison with other terminologies of the same kind. So very little is known about the Lamet and their ethnic congeners that historical or cultural considerations cannot be adduced. The main principle of elucidation on which we must therefore rely is the necessity, general in systems of asymmetric alliance, of keeping wife-givers and wife-takers distinct.

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The following elements in the terms are constant qualifiers: *-tau*, old; *-num*, young; *-peit*, little; *-kwn*, elder person. In the examination that follows I deal almost exclusively with the radicals. With these observations in mind, we have now to examine the following terms and genealogical specifications:

(1) *tā* = FZH. This is a term applying extensively to senior relatives, and it is very unlikely that it should also apply to FZH. Firstly, FZH is also designated by *pē*, and there is no obvious reason why two terms should be applied to this position. Secondly, assuming that we have to do with an asymmetric system, *pē* is applied lineally (FZH-ZH-DH), and is opposed as a line to *tā* (WF-WB); and it would be quite inconsistent with this opposition if the senior member of the *pē* line were also called *tā*. Thirdly, in asymmetric systems the wife-givers are usually regarded as superior to wife-takers. In the Lamet terminology *tū* applies to senior relatives (FF, MF) and *pē* does not, so that it is a plausible inference that *tā* are regarded by Lamet as superior to *pē*; and on this ground also it is unlikely that *tā* should designate FZH.

(2) *mā* = WeBW. The term also applies to FZ, a position which so far as I know is invariably denoted by a singular term in systems of asymmetric alliance; and this alone leads one to doubt the specification WeBW. Further, WeBW is wife of a wife-giver, while FZ is married to a wife-taker: this also leads us to think that *mā* cannot apply to both positions, and that if it applies to only one it is to FZ. This is confirmed by the facts that no other term is reported for FZ, while WBW is redundantly denoted by both *mā* and *yū*, the latter of which is thus probably the correct term.

(3) *pē* = WeB. Similar considerations apply to this specification. If *pē* denotes a line or class of wife-takers it is highly improbable that it will also apply to a wife-giver, especially when it would in the latter case be redundant to the consistent application of *tā* to WB.

(4) *yū* = FZS, MBS. These specifications conflict with the clear statement that this term applies to "younger brother (m.s.), sister living in the same house (w.s.), unmarried man or woman, childless, of the same clan and younger than the speaker, mother's sister's sons and daughters who are younger than the speaker" (p. 90). They are also found in an unexpected place in the list of terms, viz. under *ning*, a term used only by a woman to denote FZD, MBD. The proposed specifications would not only confuse siblings and cross-cousins, but would in an asymmetric alliance system confuse wife-givers and wife-takers and both with lineal kin⁵. It could perhaps be that *yū* denotes FZS (ms), and that it denotes MBS from the point of view of a

⁵ This anomaly is reported also from the Purum, but is similarly disquieting in the ethnography of that society also.

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woman. This would indicate the affinal character of FZS, i. e. a man whose sister a man may not marry, any more than he may marry the sister of his own brother (*yū*); but this interpretation would be inapplicable to a woman's usage, for to her *yū* clearly denotes a woman, not a man, whether MBS or any other. If, however, it is applicable to a man, then for a woman it denotes the man (MBS) whom she is forbidden to marry, as she is forbidden to marry her own brother.

(5) *al* = WBD. This conflicts with the specifications eZ, MZDe. WBD is also denoted by *voi*; and since in an asymmetric system WBD is characteristically equated with SW, as here, we may conclude that *voi* = WBD is correct and that *al* is not. Also, *al* denotes elder sister or female parallel cousin with no alternative or redundant term, so we may assume that this usage is the correct one. There is one qualification to be made, however. In the ethnography, *al* denotes eZ only when used by a woman; but if this were exclusively the case there would be no term for eZ (ms), but only a term for MZDe. This is unlikely, and it is an obvious inference that *al* denotes sister for a man as well as a woman.

(6) *ko* = MBS. Since this term denotes FZD, i. e. a female in a wife-taking line, it is improbable that it should also be applied by a man to MBS, i. e. to a male in a wife-giving line. It is almost certainly used by a woman only to designate MBS, i. e. reciprocally by the woman who is called *ko* by this man. The inference is supported by the ethnographer's note concerning *ko* = FZD, MBS that "these cross-cousins cannot marry each other", implying that individuals of both sexes employ the term.

(7) *kon-św* = ZC. This term also denotes SS, and although there are a number of terminologies of asymmetric alliance in which ZC = SS the existence of *kōit* = ZS in this case makes the denotation ZC doubtful. (We are hampered by not knowing the translation of *św*. Cf. *kon-yū* [p. 93], a simple compound denoting "younger sister's or brother's child", an analogy which makes it perhaps unlikely that *św* should denote positions of different generations and different lines.)

(8) *kmōn* = ZS (ms, ws), BS. By these specifications the term denotes both a lineal relative and a wife-taker, as well as a wife-giver (WBS). The specification of BS is redundant to *kon* = S, BS. This latter equation is normal in a lineal descent system, and the application of *kon* here is presumably correct, meaning that BS is not denoted by *kmōn*. ZS (ms) is already denoted by *kōit*, and the same structural position is denoted by *pesau* as well, so that *kmōn* probably denotes WBS only. In this case, it would be consistent that the term should be applied to BS by a woman. ZS (ws) cannot be interpreted in this way, and is apparently incorrect.

(9) *kōit* = WeBS. If *kmōn* denotes WBS, *kōit* is redundant in this position. It is also a little suspicious in any case, for a distinct term for the son of the wife's elder brother is otherwise unknown, I believe, in asymmetric systems. To delete this specification leaves us with *kōit* = ZS and the consistent DH (ws). It is certainly not characteristic to find the distinction ZS ≠ DH (ms) in an asymmetric system, but such minor variations from the type do occur and this must therefore provisionally be accepted.

(10) *voi* = yZD. This is redundant to *tw* (the qualification "younger" being uncharacteristic). The term also denotes SW and WBD, an equation diagnostic of asymmetric alliance, and therefore more likely to be the correct application. The inference is supported by the specification BD (ws), a denotation correctly to be made by a woman married to Ego.

With these emendations the terminology is consistent and may be further analysed as a system of descent and alliance. It is conceded that the emendations are made partly on the hypothetical assumption that the terminology represents a system of a certain kind, but this does not mean that the argument is circular. It is the majority of the terms and specifications which frame the assumption; and also, whatever other emendations may be suggested, it is not plausibly possible to make the terminology agree with any other kind of system. We may now proceed, therefore, to an examination of the terminological equations and distinctions⁶.

Those relating to descent confirm that we are dealing with a lineal descent system:

F = FB	FB ≠ MB
M = MZ	FZ ≠ MZ
B = MZS	B ≠ MBS, FZS
Z = MZD	Z ≠ MBD, FZD
S = BS	S ≠ ZS
D = BD	D ≠ ZD.

The character of the alliance system is next shown by the following equations and distinctions:

FB = MZH	MB ≠ FZH
MZ = FBW	MBW ≠ FZ
MB = WF	MBS ≠ FZS
MBW = WM	MBD ≠ FZD
SWF = WB	ZH ≠ WB
SWM = WBW	ZS ≠ WBS
SW = WBD	DH ≠ WBS
	SW ≠ ZD.

⁶ These are obvious enough to anyone at all familiar with the comparative study of descent systems, but to point them out explicitly may be of use to those who are not. Also, it is a methodological procedure which is essential and which ought therefore to be set out clearly, though commonly it is not.

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These features all confirm that Lamet society is based on a lineal descent system with asymmetric prescriptive alliance; a conclusion further supported by the lineal equations MF-MB-WB (= MBS) and FZH-ZH (= FZS) -DH. The terminology, ordered as in such a system, may best be represented as in Table 1.

The only point on which I have a slight lingering doubt is the distinction $DH \neq ZS$; but there is no structural reason why the distinction should not be made, while (assuming the application of *kōit* is correct) there is doubtless a cultural reason why it should be. The term *pesau* is apparently a compound term formed by the addition of *-sau* to the radical *pē*; but there is unfortunately no translation of the suffix to be found in the monograph. There remain a few minor points which might be examined, but none of them affects the conclusions of this examination and the characterisation of the social system.

A feature of the Table to which I would draw attention is its form⁷, viz. that the relations between the structural positions are not represented genealogically. This is diagrammatically an obvious advantage, since it does away with all the apparatus of Fig. 1 and can thus more compendiously accommodate the terms. Genealogical relations can still be easily read off from such a table, but it is a further considerable advantage in understanding such systems that the structural relations should not be identified with genealogical ones. In an asymmetric system marriage is prescribed not with the genealogically-defined individual mother's brother's daughter, but with a woman of a category not even exactly described as "matrilateral cross-cousin". It is not possible to conceive the system working with a prescription exclusively of this genealogical character, and in fact it is demonstrable that it does not (Needham 1958: 80—83); yet it is to such an assumption that a genealogical representation leads. A representation of the form of Table 1, on the other hand, emphasises the character of the terminology as essentially a classification ordered fundamentally by a mode of exchange; and it also helps us, I think, to see the system more as the members of the society themselves see it.

With this much established, I now turn to the record of marriages actually contracted, to see whether they are consistent with the inferred system. Unfortunately, the monograph includes such evidence only for the single Lower Lamet village of Mokala Panghay (pp. 119—125), and even in this record not all the partners to the marriages

⁷ I have taken this from Leach (1945: 65; 1954: 305), though I do not know whether his intentions in devising it were precisely those that I have in employing it. — I have elsewhere adapted this simple but effective method to the representation of two-section systems also (1960 b; 1960 c).

Table 1: Lamet categories of descent and alliance

f.	m.	f.	m.	f.	m.	f.
			TĀ (FF)	YĀ (FM)	TĀ (MF)	YĀ (MM)
	PĒ (FZH)	MĀ (FZ)	UN (F,FB,MZH)	NĒ (M,MZ,FBW)	TĀ (MB,WF)	YĀ (MBW,WMM)
KO (FZD)	PĒ (ZH)	AL (eZ,MZDe) YŪ (yZ,MZDy)	ĒK (eB,MZSe) [EGO] YŪ (yB,MZSy)	HAEM (MBD) KAPUN (W)	TĀ (WB,SWF)	YĀ (WBW,SWM)
TW̄ (ZD)	PESAU (DH) KOIT (ZS)	KON (D,BD)	KON (S,BS)	VOI (SW,WBD)	KM̄ON (WBS)	
			KON-SW̄ (SS)			

It will be realised that the abbreviations in parentheses are not to be regarded as definitions of the categories, but are simply those genealogical positions concordant with the categories for which explicit specifications are reported, or which can be determined by a critical examination of the relationship terminology.

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are identified by clan. However, there are 31 marriages in which the clans concerned are precisely identified. The village does not contain representatives of Kiäk or Klang, and the alliances of only five clans are thus ascertainable. These are as in Table 2.

Table 2: Alliances in Mokala Panghay village

CB, M, T →	CA →	CB, M, P	CA, CB, T →	M →	CA, CB
CA, M →	CB →	CA, M, T	CA →	P →	—
—	KI	—	CB →	T →	CA, M.
—	KL	—			

This scheme includes the following apparent contradictions, i. e. symmetric relations of direct exchange: $CA \longleftrightarrow CB$, $CA \longleftrightarrow M$, $CB \longleftrightarrow M$. However, these are by no means evidence that Lamet society is not based on asymmetric alliance, or that the system as recorded by Izikowitz was breaking down, or that the ethnography is unreliable. Firstly, one of the most important matters to keep in mind in the study of prescriptive alliance is the distinction between a simple exogamous descent group (such as a clan) and an alliance group, i. e. an exogamous descent group which is corporately concerned in the contracting and maintenance of affinal alliances with other such groups. In an asymmetric system there may well be direct exchange between clans, but the clans do not in such cases act as alliance groups. The alliances are then contracted between segments of the clans, and are contracted asymmetrically in accordance with the rules of the system; so that what is superficially in contradiction to the system proves as a matter of social fact to be in accordance with it (Needham 1957: 178; 1958: 85—87). I would suggest that this is how Table 2 should be interpreted; a suggestion fortified by the fact that there are only seven clans altogether in Lamet society, which makes it very unlikely on comparative grounds that they should be alliance groups⁸. Also, local descent groups separated by considerable distances of difficult country are likely in any case to assume the character of separate alliance groups (Leach 1951: 24; Needham 1957: 174). Moreover, 18 of the marriages in this case were contracted within the village itself, making it even less likely that the dispersed clan should be an alliance group. There is no evidence in the monograph to permit a clear conclusion on these matters; but on comparative and other grounds there is no reason for unease about the concordance of the Lamet alliance system with the reported marriages.

⁸ Direct exchange between clans occurs, for instance, in an area of eastern Sumba where 17 clans are related in an asymmetric system (Needham 1957). How much the more likely here, then, with only seven.

Before continuing with the analysis, it may be of interest at this point to refer to the characterisation of the system by the only other anthropologist who, to my knowledge, has published anything on Lamet social structure. Murdock, in his "World Ethnographic Sample" (1957: 680), for the most part assigns Lamet institutions to correct categories in his classification; but concerning marriage he is inexact, and concerning the type of terminology incorrect.

In his column 12 the Lamet are characterised as "Po", meaning "Patrilineal descent, kindreds being unreported" and "matrilateral cross-cousin marriage allowed asymmetrically, i. e. unions allowed with MoBrDa, forbidden or unreported with FaSiDa". This is inexact, for though not untrue it should be "Pm", i. e. "matrilateral cross-cousin marriage preferred asymmetrically". This is not right, either, for Lamet marriage is in fact prescribed matrilocally; but since Murdock takes no account of the radical distinction between preferred and prescribed marriage his categories include only "preferred", and it is under this heading that the Lamet rule should have been listed.

In Murdock's column 13 the Lamet relationship terminology is characterised as "Mm" meaning "Murngin cousin terminology, i. e. FaSiCh distinguished from MoBrCh and both distinguished from siblings and parallel cousins without conforming to either the Crow, the descriptive, or the Omaha pattern" and "bifurcate merging". This is incorrect, for Lamet WB (structurally = MBS) is equated with WF, MB; and conversely ZH (structurally = FZS) is radically equated with DH. By Murdock's criteria the Lamet thus have an "Omaha cousin terminology, i. e. MoBrCh equated with kinsmen of a higher generation, and/or FaSiCh with kinsmen of a lower generation", and they should have been listed as "Om"⁹.

In these two fundamental respects, therefore, the Lamet are misrepresented in Murdock's comparative classification, and in fact his classification is incapable of accurately representing Lamet society since, more fundamental criticisms aside, it has no place for what is this society's distinctive and defining feature, viz. prescriptive alliance.

III

The most intriguing and consequential feature of societies practising prescriptive alliance, and that which is the key to any radical understanding of them, is the structural concordance between what we may distinguish as the social order and the symbolic order. In various analyses I have been concerned to demonstrate that social organisation and symbolic forms in such societies are aspects of one conceptual

⁹ These observations are not made in churlish disregard of Murdock's modest plea for correction (1957: 687), but reflect a radical criticism of the comparative projects he has undertaken (cf. Murdock 1949; 1959), a matter which I shall take up at length elsewhere. — Writing in another place, Murdock lists the Lamet as having a "Sudanese" terminology (1959: 139), i. e. "FaSiDa and MoBrDa called by different terms and terminologically differentiated also from sisters, parallel cousins, aunts, and nieces; usually but not always associated with descriptive terminology" (1949: 224). By these different criteria the characterisation of the Lamet terminology is correct, though to what use it can be put is another matter.

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order, only arbitrarily to be separated for our purposes of description and analysis. With adequate ethnographic information, a scheme of symbolic classification may be discovered through which it may be seen that the most disparate kinds of groups, things, values, natural phenomena, and so on are systematically related as "total social facts" (Needham 1958; 1959 b; 1960 b). It would thus be of quite unusual interest if Lamet culture could be analysed in this way, but it is here particularly that the economic emphasis of the monograph proves deficient for my purpose. However, there are some encouraging indications, which I now proceed to examine.

The dwellings of the Lamet are regarded as "strictly sacred" (p. 63), and it is in these that, by analogy with other societies practising asymmetric alliance (Purum, Batak, Sumbanese), we may expect the first indication of symbolic notions. Neither the Lower Lamet nor the Upper Lamet house is oriented (pp. 51, 55 — village plans), which is one common feature, but the internal divisions of the Lower Lamet house (Fig. 2) convey an expectable and invaluable kind of information.

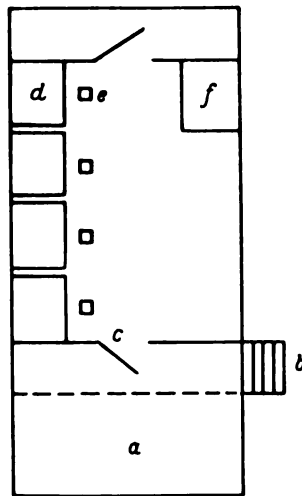


Fig. 2. Plan of Lower Lamet dwelling (after Izikowitz, p. 60, Fig. 13)
(a = verandah; b = steps; c = entrance; d = house-owner's sleeping-place;
e = hearth; f = sleeping-place for unmarried girls)

The owner of the house has his sleeping-place at the back of the house. From his point of observation there are a number of other sleeping-places along the wall on his right (which I shall regard as the "right" side of the house), the wall against which his own place also is. The order of the sleeping-places is: master of the house, first

wife, junior wife, married children. On the "left" at the back sleep the unmarried but marriageable women of the house, and at the front on the same side are the steps to the entrance on the verandah¹⁰. In front of each sleeping-place on the right is a hearth: "The row of hearths itself forms a kind of line of demarcation, which divides the room into two parts. Only those who belong to the home . . . may sit or sleep on the berths [on the right]. A stranger should not intrude over this line" (p. 61). Boys past puberty do not sleep in the house but in the men's house (p. 74). Marriageable girls receive their suitors in their own quarters on the left: "the bunk of the girls naturally lies outside the taboo line, and therefore can be used by people not belonging to the house" (p. 75). There is complete sexual liberty before marriage, and the lovers sleep together in this part of the dwelling. The character of the family dwelling is underlined by the fact that there are no such conventional divisions in the farm huts where the families live at certain times of the year, and where bachelors also sleep with their mistresses, and there is no "taboo line" in them to divide family from strangers (p. 76).

This is all remarkably reminiscent of the Purum house (Needham 1958: 89—91), and I infer that these dispositions may well have similar symbolic connotations. There are two axes of status. First, the major division into the places of family and of strangers, which divisions I characterise as respectively "right" and "left". There is no specific warrant for these designations in the ethnography, but there are nonetheless grounds of the most general kind for assuming that the sides of the house will be so distinguished by the Lamet themselves (Hertz 1909). On the right we have the owner of the house, on the left visitors and courting youths. The former is also the father of the girls whom the suitors may wish to marry; i. e. he is wife-giver, they are wife-takers. The right belongs to the married, the left to the unmarried. An obvious general characterisation is that the right side is superior to the left. The other axis runs from back to front, and along this also the gradations are indisputably from senior to junior, superior to inferior. These dispositions display a coherent and readily comprehensible order. The one feature of the house which I find puzzling is that the altar to the ancestors is in the middle of the wall "to the right of the entrance" (p. 58), viz. to what I propose is the Lamet left. This is at first sight inconsistent with the respective characters of the sides of the house, and one would expect the altar-shelf to be on the superior side, associated with the family to whose ancestors it is dedicated. There is, moreover, what appears to be a

¹⁰ The position of the entrance is confirmed by the photographs in Figures 14—16 (pp. 62—63).

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contrary evidence, in that baskets containing sacrificial meat are hung, not on the side where the altar is reported to be, but to "the left of the door of the house" (p. 329), i.e. on what I distinguish as the superior (and possibly sacred) "right" side. This is consistent with the inferred symbolic form of the house, and arouses doubt about the actual location of the altar, but there is nothing in the ethnography to resolve this situation. (Naturally, we cannot assume that such matters will necessarily be perfectly consistent, or that we have correctly grasped the principles of symbolic order operative in this context; but we can only proceed on the premiss of consistency, while no other interpretation of the dispositions at issue seems plausible.)

The next promising field of investigation is prestations. In systems of asymmetric alliance these are commonly divided into the two major classes mentioned, according to whether they are made by wife-givers or by wife-takers. The former may be designated "feminine goods" and the latter "masculine goods". These prestations may be tangible, such as animals or other material items of wealth, or intangible, such as labour or ritual services (cf. Needham 1958: 94—6). Lamet ethnography gives us usable information mostly on the former.

Such prestations are most prominent in marriage arrangements. Bridewealth among the Lower Lamet is two to four buffaloes, sometimes gongs, and rarely a bronze drum; and there is usually a period of bride-service, depending on the amount of bridewealth paid, one buffalo being reckoned equivalent to one year's labour. The payment can be reduced to one pig, but such a payment is despised. The counter-payment made by the wife's family consisted in one marriage of: a silk skirt, wine-jug, Chinese bowl, axe, chopping-knife, lance, turban, two cotton skirts, silver bracelets, and a woman's copper waist-band (pp. 100—102). Izikowitz implies that these goods are associated with feminine, for he says that in contrast "a man pays with more masculine things, such as buffaloes". Most of them clearly are associated with women; the chopping-knife may easily be proper to a woman's use, while we are specifically told that women use axes for getting firewood (p. 267). There remains the "lance". This is not a hunting-spear, but is used only for sacrificial purposes (p. 181). There is no decisive way of interpreting its presence among what appear to be generically "feminine goods", but there is a very likely explanation. Certain sacrifices are performed for the husband (wife-taker) by the wife's father (wife-giver) in connexion with children, for the possibility of having children "lies in the power" of the wife's ancestral spirits (p. 103). We may say then that wifegivers perform ritual (sacrificial) services as prestations to wife-takers¹¹; and it is consistent

¹¹ This is contrary to Purum ideas (Needham 1958: 96), but agrees with the allocation of religious authority among the Batak of Sumatra, who

with this relationship that they should also give a sacrificial lance to their wife-takers, and that this lance should properly figure among feminine goods.

We may therefore see the former goods and services (buffaloes, gongs, drums, labour) as constituting consistently a class of masculine goods, and the latter (women, children, sacrifices, womanly appurtenances) as a complementary class of feminine goods. This much can be seen simply in an examination of the facts, guided by the common features of asymmetric alliance. Izikowitz, however, without such reference, explicitly supports the fundamental categorisation of prestations in the context of marriage: "There seems to be a division of articles into masculine and feminine categories. The men often contribute with buffaloes, bronze drums and gongs, in the matter of bride price, while women bring silks, clothes and jewels . . . as dowry" (p. 316). He adds, though, that perhaps the woman may bring a pig "on some occasions", and this is inconsistent, for we have seen that a pig may be given as bridewealth and thus figure as a masculine good. However, this statement seems to rest on the report of a single divorce case, and Izikowitz specifically says that he did not get this point quite clear (p. 296). In any case, I would not claim that every prestation is symbolically significant, or that all prestations must be made always in the same direction as in the symbolic contexts in which they figure. What is important is that there is a general division of goods and services into two classes of distinct symbolic significance, characterised as "masculine" and "feminine", and that these are appropriately prestations to wife-givers and wife-takers respectively.

There remain certain other evidences which confirm the above summation and make clearer the relations between affines and the place of prestations in Lamet culture. At the conclusion of a marriage agreement a pig is sacrificed (p. 103). It is not stated to which spirits the sacrifice is made, but the analogy I wish to establish is that between the prestation of a pig as a masculine good, made (even if exceptionally) to wife-givers, i.e. by inferiors to superiors, and the prestation of a pig by mortals to spirits, thus similarly by inferiors to superiors. This type of relationship is further seen in the sacrifices connected with children. In order to get a child a pig is sacrificed to the ancestral spirits of the wife, and it is the wife's father who performs the sacrifice. However, it is the husband who provides the pig, not the wife's father; so that here we see expressed a dual relationship of a common nature, viz. a prestation of a masculine good at once by wife-taker to wife-giver, and by mortals to spirits, and thus in both

also practise asymmetric alliance. Such notions may thus vary from instance to instance, but the interest of the distinctive ascription of religious authority to either wife-givers or wife-takers remains.

aspects by inferiors to superiors. Also, when a child is born a pig is sacrificed to "the ancestors", though to which is not explicitly stated (p. 103). If twin boys are born, a buffalo is sacrificed to the husband's ancestral spirits in order to prevent his own early death after such an unlucky event. If he cannot afford a buffalo a pig has to suffice (p. 104). Two pigs are sacrificed at the funeral ceremony of a young girl, and buffaloes at that of an elderly person who has children (p. 106). These instances also confirm the symbolic character of the prestations and the nature of the relationship they express. The case of the buffalo is of particular interest, for this animal, which is the supreme prestation both to wife-givers and to spirits, is "looked upon with special veneration": when it is spoken of the ordinary particle denoting animals, *to*, is not used, but *kun*, a term used of old people (Izikowitz 1941: 6). This detail makes it the more clear that to give it constitutes an honorific prestation and that the recipients are of superior status. There is no evidence that this or any other of these prestations can ever be made in the opposite sense.

There are certain other indications of Lamet ideology, but their symbolic significance is not clear. For example, cooking with red peppers is done in the men's house but is not allowed in the dwelling house; weapons and implements are made in the former, but may not be in the latter; the men's house is a "hunting centre", where weapons are kept and game is cut up. Women may not sleep there and rarely enter the place, and then only briefly during feasts, to bring water, or to welcome to the village guests who stay there (pp. 71—2, 76—7). These prohibitions and customs are laid down by the ancestral spirits. It seems, then, as though there were an opposition of men's house to dwelling house in terms of "hot" things (an idea common enough in many simpler cultures), blood, weapons and masculine pursuits; but it is not evident how this is to be related to the rest of the ideas that we have isolated. It seems rather clearer, though still not certain, that there is a distinction between "good death" and "bad death"; for among the evil spirits in the forest are "those of people who have died of cholera" (p. 154), and there is also a class of ghosts of men "dead by accident" (1941: 9). These facts are immediately reminiscent of the widespread belief that persons dead inauspiciously — in war, childbirth, by accident or some dreaded disease — cannot join their fellows in the afterworld but remain on earth as malicious ghosts¹².

Further, there is a tantalising indication of an ideological division of the village itself into two "halves" or "sides", separated by the village square where the men's house is and by the village street

¹² Cf. Purum, Kom, Aimol, etc. See also the survey and discussion of such beliefs, in Indonesia, by Sell (1955).

which runs the length of the village. The ethnographer noted this division on the occasion of a death, when these two halves were prevented from having any contact with each other. The doors at each end of the men's house face the sides: ordinarily either may be used by anyone from either side, but at a death persons must use only the entrance opening on to their own half and cook only at the hearth which is on that side. The members of the two sides are even prohibited to speak with each other at this time (1941: 13; 1951: 104—5). This is all very intriguing, but cannot be explained on the evidence available. Firstly, one would expect the divisions to be based perhaps on localised lineal descent groups, such that members of certain clans should live exclusively on one side and other clans on the other; but a correlation of Izikowitz's Fig. 8 (p. 55)¹³ and Table 5 (pp. 119—125) shows at once that households are not localised by clan, but that members of any one clan are dispersed all over the village. One naturally looks, too, for complementary services, whatever the basis of the division, such that e.g. the dead of one side are buried by members of the other; but it seems that this is not the case. Nevertheless, it is of considerable interest that such a division is made: certainly it is a feature of Lamet ideology which we should not ignore, and we shall see something of its possible importance below.

Finally, there is a territorial division into domains of different kinds of spirits. Every village has its own spirits, of which the chief are the "village spirit proper" (*mbrōng ying*), the spirit of the men's house, that of water or the village spring, that of the village gates, etc. The village spirit is the most important of all, and lives "under the ground of the village territory, i.e. where the village stands, and not outside its limit" (1941: 14). "Dangerous spirits . . . run riot outside the two magic gates of the village" (p. 103): they come along the caravan trails leading to the village, and attach themselves to strangers entering from the outside world (pp. 54, 56). Here we find, then, a parallel symbolic demarcation to that of the house and the village itself. One side is associated, it appears, with the inside, the group to which one belongs, and security; the other with the outside, strangers, and peril.

Even the scant symbolic material examined here permits the establishment of an outline scheme of classification of a kind typically found with prescriptive alliance. To appreciate this, however, it is first necessary to note one crucial point. Although there must exist a minimum of three lines for an asymmetric system to be possible, and

¹³ This plan includes, incidentally, two households marked "XX". According to the correct location of "XXI", either T is on both sides of the village or the two T households are on the opposite side to P; but in neither case is the conclusion affected that membership of the sides is not determined by clan.

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although from the point of view of any one line there are accordingly two others, the fundamental relation in the system is not triadic but dyadic, viz. between wife-giver and wife-taker. Any given alliance group is wife-taker and therefore inferior to another, but in a different context it is also wife-giver and therefore superior to another. That is, alliance status is not absolute but relative. The distinction to be appreciated is that between *system* and component *relation*. It is through this dyadic relationship that the alliance system (i. e. what is to all effects the social order) may be related to the symbolic order. Together, as aspects of one conceptual order, they may be subsumed under a dualistic scheme of analogical classification indicated by the following oppositions. The oppositions are listed seriatim as they have been elicited or inferred in the exposition of the relevant facts.

inferior	superior
women	men
wife-takers (<i>pē</i>)	wife-givers (<i>tā</i>)
junior	senior
unmarried	married
public	private
strangers	family
feminine goods	masculine goods
mortals	spirits
bad death	good death
village-side (1)	village-side (2)
evil spirits	good spirits
outside world,	village, cultivated
outside [forest	inside [land
danger	security.

We see here, as elsewhere with prescriptive alliance, a mode of classification by which things, groups, qualities, values, spatial notions and ideas of the most disparate kinds are ordered and related within one system of relations.

It should perhaps be emphasised, to make matters quite clear, that the terms are not to be regarded as denoting substantive entities of such a sort that one might aim at compiling in this way a complete catalogue comprising all cultural items and their particular opposed terms, or such that this summary scheme might be taken as merely a partial representation of a classification. The point is that in making this analysis we are discerning a *mode of thought*; and further oppositions would not be of value in "completing" the classification, but in illustrating in other contexts how exactly this mode of thought has been apprehended and in extending the social and natural range of its recorded application. What I would claim, in fact, is that here we begin to understand how the Lamet see their world. If the analysis has been correctly made we have not simply arranged the data in a

coherent and analytically expedient way, but we have grasped the radically important feature — the structure — of Lamet ideology. In this light, Lamet society presents itself as an example of what Mauss termed a "total social system".

IV

The chief conclusion of this analysis is that it has been demonstrated that asymmetric alliance is practised in Laos by a Mon-Khmer-speaking people, i.e. in an area and linguistic family where it has not hitherto been reported. This discovery is of considerable theoretical importance in the comparative study of prescriptive alliance, and Izikowitz's ethnography is of quite singular value on this account.

One of the most interesting aspects of this comparative study is that here, if anywhere, we have to do with a structural, and not a cultural or historical, problem. Asymmetric systems of very much the same kind as the Lamet have been found among peoples speaking Tibeto-Burman, Malayo-Polynesian, Papuan, Siberian, and African languages; so that it is clear that there is no possibility of effectively explaining the common features of social life and ideology among them by reference to common culture or common historical pasts. I would not at all wish to deny that cultural or historical enquiries have a place in these comparative investigations; and indeed it is a fact that the forms of prescriptive alliance among the Kuki tribes of the Indo-Burma border, for example, may properly be understood only when recourse is had to their common culture and their historical connexions. But it is also a fact that there is a range of problems which are not susceptible of such explanation, and which can be dealt with only in structural terms¹⁴. To this situation can now be added the case of the Lamet, an instance of asymmetric alliance from a language family (Mon-Khmer) which is unrelated to the others, and which has no known historical connexion with even the nearest societies (in north Burma) of the same type. This does not, of course, fundamentally change the analytical situation, but it does intensify the realisation of the extent to which the enquiry is necessarily structural¹⁵.

¹⁴ These problems may be of relevance to the discussion of the relation of social anthropology to history. Structural investigations of this sort are typically made by social anthropologists (pre-eminently by *Lévi-Strauss*) but not by historians. The only such "structuralist" in an historically-defined discipline who comes to mind is Georges *Dumézil*, a philologist who styles himself a *comparatiste* and whose exciting investigations into the ideology of Indo-European society have attracted the admiration of social anthropologists.

¹⁵ An ethnological investigation which it suggests, however, is whether traces of such social organisation and symbolic classification are found

My main methodological point is to emphasise the minute and comprehensive examination of all the evidence that is essential if any part of the system is to be understood. In particular, the nature of this system entails that "kinship" and "marriage" cannot be dealt with as though they were self-contained institutions, but that they must be seen in their relations to other spheres of social interest in terms of the ideology by which they are identically ordered¹⁶. In effect, the present analysis is a modest parallel venture to Leach's sociological classic on Trobriand clans and the category of *tabu*, in which he demonstrates that the meaning of a term cannot be appreciated until one has understood the system of which it is a part (1958: 143). (This proposition sounds tritely axiomatic, but consider our ethnographer's puzzlement over the prohibition on marriage between *ko*.) I have tried to show that, in such a case as this, the terminology cannot even be correctly established except by simultaneously discerning the system which it reflects; and that this undertaking entails a painstaking examination and interrelation of every scrap of evidence, whether or not it appears to have any connexion with the conventionally-defined institutions of "kinship". That is, what is required is a "total structural analysis".

This does not mean merely the usual establishing of "functional" connexions between particular institutions. It involves seeing as wide a range of social facts as possible in terms of a pervasive mode of relation, i. e. the kind of analysis characteristically advocated by Mauss (cf. Lévi-Strauss 1947: 536). This method is thus not at all novel, but it has been unduly ignored; and one of the reasons for this appears to be that it is only in the analysis of certain types of society that it can very profitably be attempted. The sole novel point I wish to make here is that it is precisely a society based on prescriptive alliance which is pre-eminently an example of a Maussian total social system. In lineal descent systems without such prescriptive regulation of marriage a total structural analysis is generally far less feasible,

elsewhere among a Mon-Khmer-speaking people. The Palaung, however, are too far affected by Buddhism, Shan culture, and foreign administration for much of these features to have survived, and Milne's monograph (1924) gives no indication of them; while the ethnography on the Wa and Lawa is too exiguous to permit such an investigation.

¹⁶ It is true that there is a certain technical interest in studying these institutions in this form of society, but I should like to stress that for me a central fascination in working on prescriptive alliance is the peculiarly satisfying structural analysis which it permits, while in contrast I find a great deal of what is commonly termed "kinship" tedious and unprofitable. The focus of interest in such studies as this paper is ideological and symbolic, and the type of analysis made here is equally applicable to problems in which kinship hardly enters (cf. Needham 1960 a) or does not enter at all (as e. g. in the study of Hindu iconography).

and in cognatic societies it is even less possible¹⁷. A prescriptive rule of marriage is the paradigm of "total social fact".

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¹⁷ My own experience has been with an asymmetric system (though I cannot regard this as much more than an extended reconnaissance), a bilineal system without prescriptive alliance, and cognatic societies.

Synopsis

Das Verwandtschafts- und Klassifikationssystem bei den Lamet

Die Lamet, eine Mon-Khmer sprechende Völkerschaft in den Bergregionen des oberen Mekong-Beckens, wirtschaftlich durch Trockenreis-anbau charakterisiert, sind sozial in sieben patrilinealen Clans organisiert. Das Heiratssystem ist asymmetrisch: Heirat mit einem klassifikatorischen mütterlichen Kreuzvettern ist vorgeschrieben, so daß zum Funktionieren des Systems mindestens drei verschiedene Clans notwendig sind.

Interessant ist dabei eine Übereinstimmung zwischen sozialer und symbolischer Ordnung. Mit den Verwandtschaftsbeziehungen ist z. B. ein Gabensystem gekoppelt, das zwar reziprok, jedoch bezüglich der Gelegenheiten und der Art der jeweiligen Verpflichtungen traditionell geregelt ist. Aus weiteren Einzelheiten kann nun sogar auf ein umfassendes Schema symbolischer Klassifikation geschlossen werden, das ganz heterogen erscheinende Phänomene — Gruppen, Dinge, Werte usw. — systematisch einander zuordnet.

Hierher gehören eine bestimmte Raumaufteilung im Innern der Wohnhäuser, verschiedenartig aufgegliederte Opferverpflichtungen, vorgestellte Gegensätze zwischen Wohnhäusern und Männerhaus, zwischen zwei Eingängen und Hälften des Junggesellenhauses bei bestimmten Gelegenheiten, und zwischen Kategorien in der Welt der Geister. Ferner ist trotz der Notwendigkeit dreier Linien für die asymmetrische Heiratsregelung auch das Gesamt-Verwandtschaftssystem dyadisch und nicht triadisch. Der Status der Linien ist nämlich relativ, d. h. die als sozial höher betrachtete Linie der Frauen-Geber gilt zugleich gegenüber der Linie, aus der sie selbst ihre Frauen nehmen muß, als sozial niedriger.

So sind auch die sozialorganisatorischen Aspekte unter eine dualistische, übergreifende Ordnung für die Erscheinungen der Real- und Vorstellungswelt zu subsumieren. Sie ist primär nicht als ein Einteilungsschema, sondern als eine grundlegende Sichtweise aufzufassen. Das hiermit verbundene Problem ist im wesentlichen *struktureller* Art. Es dürfte kulturell oder historisch schon deshalb nicht erklärt werden können, als asymmetrische Verwandtschaftsordnungen an den verschiedensten Stellen der Erde gefunden werden, für die historische oder kulturelle Zusammenhänge so gut wie ausgeschlossen sind. Allgemein darf geschlossen werden, daß Verwandtschaft und Heirat nicht als gleichsam selbstgenügsame Institutionen behandelt werden können. Sie sind stets im Zusammenhang mit anderen Sphären sozialer Interessen sowie mit der vorherrschenden Ideologie zu sehen. Nur eine „totale Strukturanalyse“ kann auch die Prinzipien der Verwandtschaftsordnung zureichend klären.

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